

Additional Resources



Updated June 16

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How to use the Sample Letters to Send to Parents

We want to make sure that no child or youth misses an opportunity to receive the initiation sacraments. That's how the Sacramental Education Initiative (a collaborative effort between the Archdiocese of Edmonton and the Catholic school board chairs and superintendents) began.

Parents are very busy. Often they are working to support their family, helping their children be successful in school and also supporting them in extra-curricular activities. Families move. Some families have more than one child. Each child will have a different experience preparing for the sacraments. These letters keep the communication open for parents so that they know what to expect and when sacramental preparation will take place for their child.

This letter is meant to be a first step to reaching out to parents and that is why it is available in these languages:

- Amharic
- Croatian
- English
- Filipino-Tagalog
- French
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese

Use this letter at the beginning of each school year. Include the parish and school logo on the letter to show parents you are working together on this.

Printing Instructions

These letters are available online on the Archdiocesan website www.caedm.ca.

Sample Letters to Send to Parents

Re: Preparing children and youth for the sacraments

Dear Parents:

Welcome to a new year of Catholic education and faith formation for your child!

Did you know?

- Each year, in a Catholic school, your child will learn about many aspects of their Catholic faith—including learning about the seven sacraments.
- However, in our Archdiocese, preparing children for the celebration of their own sacraments **always occurs** in the parish, with the support of the school, and:
 - preparing for First Reconciliation, and then First Eucharist, takes place when children are about seven years old and in Grade Two
 - preparing for Confirmation takes place when children are about 12 years old and in Grade 6.

Preparing people to receive sacraments is a time-honoured practice of the Church. Faith formation is a lifelong process. Sacraments are milestones—signposts— along this faith journey. They are like road signs that guide us on the way to holiness, continually point us towards Christ, and ultimately lead us to our final destination which is heaven. Every time we participate in one of these sacred moments, we encounter Christ. Most children attending Catholic schools are ready to receive at the ages shown above. They are then prepared with their peers at these ages.

Are you seeking for your child to celebrate a sacrament, such as First Communion or Confirmation? Are you ready to help them live out the promise they make when they do?

Here's how:

Parents, (Parish name) and (School name) are each involved in preparing your child for a Catholic sacrament. It is a group effort, and everyone has a role:

- As a parent, the Church has always held that you are the primary teacher of the faith for your child. You teach them about God; you set the example; you talk about your own faith; and you bring them to Mass.
- The place where the sacraments are celebrated and lived is the Catholic parish. The people of God in that place are part of the Body of Christ. Being in relationship with the parish community (with all its weaknesses and strengths) is essential for your life of faith. The preparation for, and celebration of, the sacraments happens in the parish church.
 - **You must sign your child up for preparation at the parish.** The school doesn't do this part of the process.
- Catholic schools are a special place for children to learn more about Jesus Christ, to practice living in a community of faith, and to develop and deepen a relationship with Christ.

We (Catholic parish and Catholic school) are eager to walk beside you and your children during this very special time. To find out more please visit (parish name, with parish website link).

Re: Invitation to Confirmation

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Has your grade nine daughter or son received the Sacrament of Confirmation? Would they like to receive this sacrament? Would you like your child to be confirmed?

During the Sacramental Education Initiative, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Edmonton and its ten Catholic school districts, we have discovered that some young people have not yet been confirmed in the faith and, therefore, fully initiated into the Church. If your son or daughter has not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation, (parish name) and (school name) invite you and your child to consider participating in the sacramental preparation program offered by the parish.

Christian initiation begins with Baptism which is sealed with Confirmation. The Eucharist renews both of these sacraments weekly'. God calls each of us to a life-long faith journey, and the Church's sacraments supply us with all of the spiritual resources necessary for it. Confirmation completes one's initiation into the Church.

We earnestly hope that you will see to the completion of your child's initiation. The Holy Spirit, bestowed in Confirmation, unites us more closely to Jesus and fills us with the gifts we need for an abundant life.

For more information, please contact (name here).

How to use the Baptism, Confirmation and Becoming Catholic (RCIA) Handbills

These handbills are meant to be ‘props’ to use in intentional human conversations... not simply to be stored on an information rack. You (a priest, pastoral assistant, principal or teacher) must know where the child you are talking to is on their sacramental journey. Then you start a conversation with the child and child’s parents about taking the next step on their lifelong faith journey.

Perhaps the child is entering kindergarten and has not yet been baptized. Perhaps a child is in Grade Five, and has not yet received their First Communion. Perhaps a young person is in high school, yet has not been confirmed. **These are great opportunities!** You can then be the welcoming face of the Church and invite them to take the next step.

Here are some possible scenarios to illustrate how you would give out the handbill.

Home Scenario

Scenario 1: Grandparent, Sibling, Relative, Friend

Grandfather Bill can share a *Baptism for your child* handbill with his son/daughter, and gently begin a conversation about getting the grandchild baptized.

Parish Scenarios

Scenario 1: Marriage Preparation

Ginny, the pastoral assistant at St. Pancras Parish, runs marriage preparation in the parish. When talking about family and children, she hands out the handbills to the engaged couples to plant the seed about sacraments for their children-to-be.

Ginny uses the *Confirmation* or *Becoming Catholic* handbill to invite the non-Catholic party in the engaged couple to consider (a) completing their initiation sacraments, or (b) becoming Catholic.

Scenario 2: Newcomers in the Parish

Deacon Juan is speaking with people who have just registered in the parish. He uses the appropriate handbill to suit the situation of the new family. His conversation is warm, welcoming, and invitational, not judgmental.

School Scenarios

Scenario 1: A Principal with new registrant at the school

Principal Patti meets a new family whose child starts at the school in September. She has a conversation to discover why parents are choosing a Catholic education for their child. This conversation may find that one of the sacraments has not yet been received. Patti holds an invitational conversation (with the handbill) with the parents.

Scenario 2: Teacher after a Lesson

Sacraments are taught in every grade. Teacher Ms. Wing has just taught about baptism and finds out that Sally would love to be baptized. Ms. Wing now has an opportunity to explain Sally's interest to Sally's parents at meet-the-teacher night. She can invite them to learn more at their parish, and give them the Baptism for your child handbill so they can follow up.

Baptism, Confirmation and Becoming Catholic (RCIA) Handbills Printing Instructions

Parish Orders

Parishes are to contact the Office of Catechesis to order handbills.

Catholic School Orders

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton has made these “Press Ready” files available to Catholic Schools for reproduction through their own printing services if needed. These files are the correct resolution and they have the printer marks and bleeds needed for the printing service of your choice. In order to maintain the quality and “branding” integrity of the Sacramental Education Initiative please provide these print specifications to your printing services.

3.5” x 8.5” with 1/8” bleed

Double - sided

Full colour (4/4)

100lb glossy cardstock

The Sacramental Education Handbills are available in the following languages:

- Amharic
- Croatian
- English
- Filipino-Tagalog
- French
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese

Please do not substitute the specifications, alter the artwork, change or modify these handbills without permission from the Office of Communications and Public Relations.

These handbills are available online on the Archdiocesan website www.caedm.ca.

Are you seeking...
Baptism for your child?



If your child has yet to be baptized, here are some things you need to know...



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of **Edmonton**



Did you know?

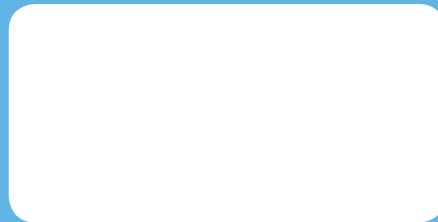
Baptism pardons sin, rescues us from the powers of darkness, and gives us dignity as children of God.

The Church encourages Baptism as soon as possible after birth. If a child was not baptized Catholic as an infant, he/she can be baptized with the consent of at least one parent before turning 7. After age 7, a child has reached the age of discernment and the preparation process (Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children) can take a year or more.

Many children in Catholic schools are already baptized. Their initiation into Catholic life continues with their family, parish, and school preparing them to receive the sacraments. They will continue their journey of initiation in the parish with their peers.

Those who have yet to be baptized are invited to officially become God's children. The Church welcomes new members at all ages.

Please contact your local parish to register your child(ren) or for more details:



Confirmation Handbill

Are you seeking...
**Confirmation for
your teenager?**



Here are some things to know...



The Catholic
**Archdiocese
of Edmonton**



Did you know?

During the Sacramental Education Initiative—sponsored by the Archdiocese of Edmonton and its ten Catholic school districts— we have discovered that some young people have not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, they are not yet fully initiated into the Church. If your son or daughter has not yet been Confirmed, we invite you and your teenager to consider participating in the Confirmation preparation program offered by your parish.

Christian initiation begins with baptism. One's baptism is sealed with Confirmation. The Sunday Eucharist renews both of these sacraments. God calls each of us to a life-long faith journey. The Church's sacraments supply us with all of the spiritual resources necessary to succeed.

We earnestly encourage and invite you to have your teenager receive the sacrament of Confirmation and complete the sacraments of initiation. The Holy Spirit, bestowed in Confirmation, seals Baptism, unites us more closely to Jesus, and fills us with the gifts we need for an abundant, faith-filled and joyful life.

We welcome you to contact your local parish or to get further details:



Becoming Catholic (RCIA) Handbill

Interested in... **Becoming Catholic?**



Here are some things you
need to know...



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton



Did you know?

An adult or child (7 and older) can become a full member of the Catholic Church by receiving the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) at the same celebration.

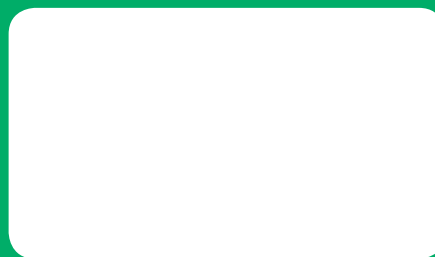
The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) is the process by which non-Catholic adults learn about the Catholic Church and prepare to become full members.

Anyone who is considering becoming a member of the Catholic community may enroll. This includes those who are not baptized, those baptized in other Christian denominations seeking to be in full communion with the Catholic Church, and those baptized in infancy as Catholics, but not brought up in the faith.

The RCIA is an eye-opening journey which provides time for learning, prayer, spiritual growth, and possible change of heart. The process can take a year or more as one learns to embrace the call to discipleship and holiness by responding to the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

The Church welcomes new members into Christ's family at all ages.

We invite you to contact your local parish for further details:



Showing the Partnership of a Parish and its Associated Schools: Websites, Bulletins and Newsletters

Two ways to ensure that the partnership between the parish and its associated schools is visible is for:

- parish information (including sacramental preparation) to be easily accessible on each school's website and monthly newsletter
- school information to be easily accessible on their associated parish's website and weekly bulletin

To maintain consistency within a school district, information should be placed in the same location on each school's website, with similar drop down menus. Information should be placed in a clear and concise manner so that parents can easily find the information.

The following examples illustrate how this information could appear on a school website and newsletter. The template for parish information and sacramental preparation could be used for a school's newsletter.

Template for School Website

Our Catholic faith tab

Under this tab, provide information about the school's history and Catholic faith connection.

Drop down menu

Parish information

- parish name
- address
- phone number
- mass times
- pastor
- contacts
- email address
- link to parish homepage

All of this information can be found on the Archdiocese of Edmonton's website under the parish heading on the top right hand corner of the home page

<http://www.caedm.ca/ParishesMassTimes.aspx>

Sacramental preparation

- Explanation of the connection between the school and the parish in the sacramental preparation process
- Contact information: name, phone number and email address
- Registration forms for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation
- Dates, times and location of sacramental preparation sessions
- Links to where the sacramental information is located on the parish website
- Information about, and pictures of, resources used
- Frequently asked questions

Links such as the following could be included:

Religious Education

- General overview of Catholic Education as found in the school
- Link to Alberta Education's parent resources for Catholic education <http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/express.aspx>

Archdiocese of Edmonton

- Explanation of partnership and links with schools

In addition, and if applicable, other links could include:

School's Namesake

- Explanation, pictures

Assemblies

Celebrations

- Celebrations that take place in schools. For example, Thanksgiving or Advent celebration with the date and time posted.
- Videos from previous celebrations can be posted

Virtues/Character traits

- These are recognition celebrations for traits practised each month
- Explanation of themes with dates of the certificate celebration

Prayer

Daily School Prayer

- Explanation of school prayer, school prayer

Liturgical Calendar

- Explanation, pictures

Living Rosary

- Explanation, date, pictures

Monthly Adoration

- Explanation, date, pictures

Monthly Masses

- Dates

Our Chapel

- Explanation, pictures

Rosary Schedule

- Explanation, dates, pictures

Retreat Programs

- Explanation, dates, pictures

Three minute prayer

- Link to prayer page or website

Other

CWL, Knights of Columbus (or other Catholic organizations) Partnerships

- Explanation and contact information

Social Justice

- Explanation, examples of projects and organizations that the school and parish support

Share Lent

- Explanation, dates, pictures

Websites

- Examples are on the following page

Youth Conference

- Explanation, dates, pictures

Template for School Newsletter

Every school newsletter should contain information about the parish and be found in the same place on each monthly newsletter. Sacramental preparation information and forms should be readily available on the school website.

Parish information

- parish name
- address
- phone number
- mass times
- pastor
- contacts
- email address
- website address

All of this information can be found on the Archdiocese of Edmonton's website under the parish heading on the top right hand corner of the home page <http://www.caedm.ca/ParishesMassTimes.aspx>

Sacramental Preparation

- explanation of the connections between the school and parish in the sacramental process of preparing children and youth for the sacraments
- dates, times and location of sacramental preparation sessions
- where to find registration forms for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation (or attach if the newsletter is on the website)
- links to where sacramental information is located on the parish website

Template for Parish Website

Our Catholic Schools

Under this tab, list the names of the associated schools.

Drop down menu

School information

- school name
- address
- phone number
- email address
- link to school homepage

All of this information can be found on the school's website.

Sacramental preparation

- Explanation of the connection between the school and the parish in the sacramental preparation process
- Contact information: name, phone number and email address
- Registration forms for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation
- Dates, times and location of sacramental preparation sessions
- Links to where the sacramental information is located on the parish website
- Information about, and pictures of, resources used
- Frequently asked questions

Template for Parish Bulletin

Every parish bulletin should contain information about its associated schools and be found in the same place on each weekly bulletin.

School information

- school name
- address
- phone number
- email address
- website address

All of this information can be found on the schools website.

Sacramental Preparation

- explanation of the connections between the school and parish in the sacramental process of preparing children and youth for the sacraments
- dates, times and location of sacramental preparation sessions
- where to find registration forms for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation

How to use the Reconciliation Resource

This Reconciliation Resource can be used in a variety of ways to help individuals prepare for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Below are some of the real-life examples of how the Reconciliation Resource can be used in home, parish and Catholic school.

Home Scenarios

Parents and their Children

The *Examination of Conscience* sections are great conversation starters for a family.

A parent may read the section titled: *Examination of Conscience for Grades 2-3* to:

- prepare their children to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- understand the age appropriate situations children face
- help guide their children in becoming authentic missionary disciples

Families can help one another grow towards becoming authentic missionary disciples when they understand the challenges each other face and work together.

Parish Scenarios

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Reconciliation Resource can be used for:

- a First Reconciliation preparation session
- penitential services
- the Archdiocesan Day of Confessions

School Scenario

Reconciliation in the School or Parish

Principal Susan at St. Thomas High School invites Pastor Don, from her associated parish, to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation with her students during Lent. Teachers prepare the students with the *Reconciliation Resource*. Students who have celebrated their First Reconciliation previously in the parish come to receive the sacrament. Students who are not Catholic are welcome to come talk to Pastor Don, or ask questions.



Confession: How Does It Work?

First take a deep breath...it's easier than you think.

Step 1

Look at your life prayerfully. Examine your conscience. Ask God to help you see where you've made some mistakes. How have you offended God and others? Ask yourself, "How can I make up for it?"

Step 2

Ask God for the courage to renew your life. Find a Catholic priest to hear your confession. The priest will begin with a greeting, and a Scripture quote. For context, tell him your state in life (single, married, separated, widowed...) and about how long it has been since your last confession. Make the Sign of the Cross, then say something like: My sins are... (start with the most serious ones, and how often you have done them. Then tell your less serious sins.)

Step 3

Listen to the priest's advice. Receive your penance (your penance is an outward act to show you regret your sins and intend to renew your life). Say an act of contrition (a vocal prayer to God showing you are contrite/sorry for your sins, asking for forgiveness, and promising to do penance and to work at being a better person). Receive absolution (absolution is the priest's prayer by which your sins are forgiven by God).

Step 4

Do your penance. Thank God and start to live a renewed and better life.

God never tires of forgiving us!

– Pope Francis

Acts of Contrition

Choose one that you are comfortable saying

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.

O my God, I am sorry for my sins because I have offended you. I know I should love you above all things. Help me to do penance, to do better, and to avoid anything that might lead me to sin. Amen.

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. 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.

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Guidelines for Children in Grades 2-3 (based on the Lord's Prayer)



Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) is not hard, but you do need to prepare.

Stop and breathe slowly. You are with God, our loving Father. Jesus said we could call God “Abba”, or Daddy.

Say this prayer:

Dear God, help me to think of all the things I have done that hurt you and others. Amen.

It is good to stop regularly to think about how we hurt others. If we are really sorry, God will heal and forgive us. We then need to decide to do better to sin no more.

Use these questions based on the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) to help you review. This review is called an ‘examination of conscience.’

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name

- Do I say my prayers every day?
- Do I pay attention during Mass, and sing and say the responses?

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

- Do I do what Jesus wants me to do?
- Do I share with others?
- Am I helpful to my family?

Give us this day our daily bread

- Am I thankful for the good things I have in my life?
- Do I think of ways to help those who have no food, clothes and money?
- Do I take things that don't belong to me?

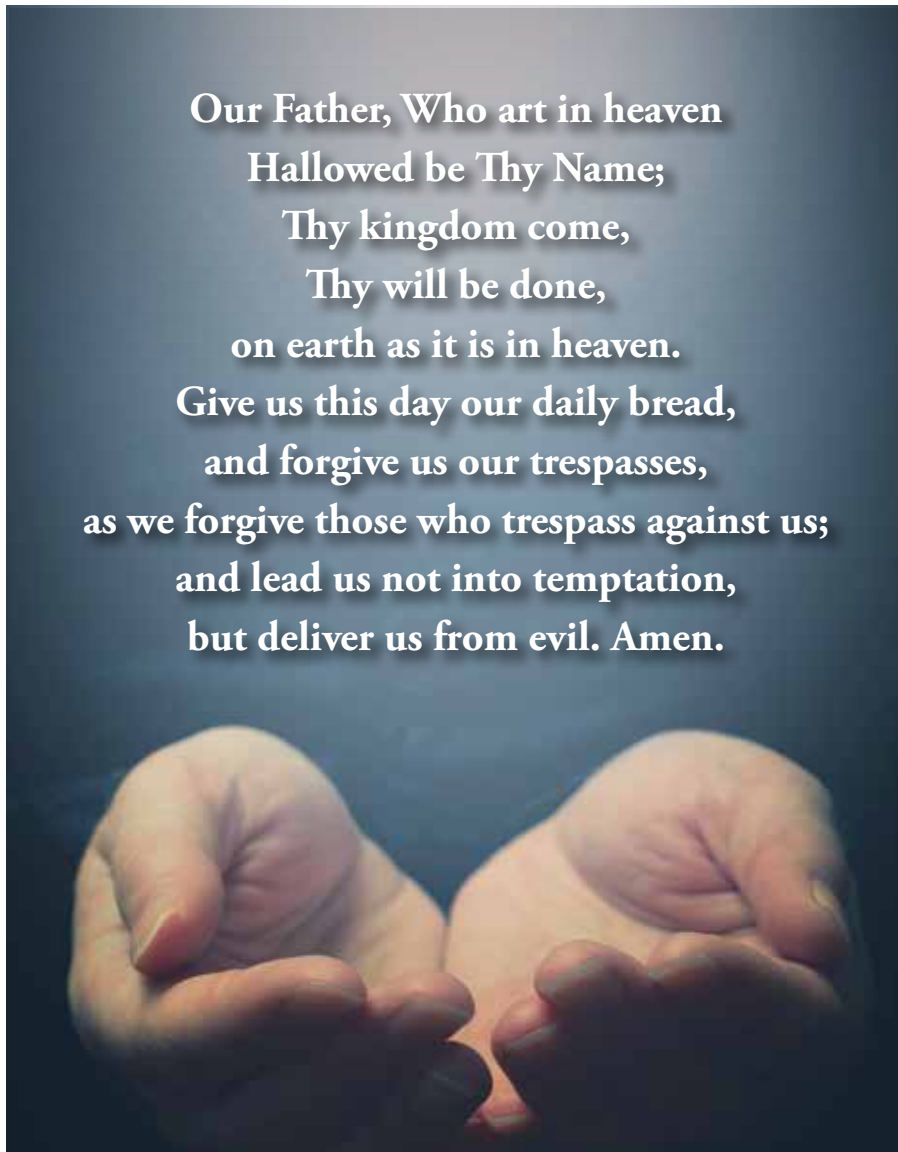
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

- Do I say I'm sorry when I have been wrong?
- Do I forgive when someone does something bad to me?
- Do I help solve problems between my friends or do I cause more trouble?

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

- Do I play fair in sports and games?
- Do I tell the truth?
- Do I set a good example by my kindness?

Our Father, Who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.



Guidelines for Children in Grades 4-6



Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) is not hard, but you do need to prepare a little. We want to find healing and forgiveness by being very sorry for our sins (repentant) and by deciding to sin no more.

Stop and breathe slowly. You are with God, our loving Father. Jesus said we could call God “Abba” or Daddy.

Say this prayer:

Dear God, help me to think of all the things I have done that hurt you and others. Amen.

Then we review our thoughts, words and actions since our last confession. We search for those thoughts, words and actions which did not follow God’s command to love Him, and to love one another. This review is called an ‘examination of conscience.’

Use these questions to help you review.

Family

- Do I do the things that my parents ask me to do?
- Do I listen?
- Am I helpful and cheerful at home?
- Am I selfish?
- Do I fight or argue with my family?
- Do I say mean things to my family?

School

- Do I listen to my teachers and my classmates?
- Do I do my homework without complaining?
- Do I talk back to my teachers?
- Am I respectful to teachers in my school?

- Am I kind to other students?
- Do I take turns?
- Do I include students who are left out?
- Do I get drawn in to things that make me uncomfortable?
- Do I stand up for myself? For others?
- Do I keep secrets that make me uncomfortable?

Friends and classmates

- Have I said or done anything to hurt my friends or other people?
- Do I talk about others behind their backs?
- Do I fight with my friends?
- Am I bossy or do I listen to my friends?
- Do I take things that belong to others?
- Do I share?

Helpful Tips

- If what you have done is something big and serious, then saying how often is important.
- Figure out what you find most difficult to change, and ask God and the priest for special help in this area.
- Try to understand why you act the way you do. For example, “I was fighting at home because I wanted my dad’s attention.” Figuring out the reason will help you deepen your conscience as you grow older.

Guidelines for Teens



Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) is not difficult, but it does require preparation. You are now at an age where it is important to intentionally form your conscience. You do so by learning to live as Jesus taught us.

Begin with prayer, placing yourself in the presence of God, our loving Father. Ask God to bring to your mind those times you have hurt Him or others. You are seeking healing and forgiveness by being repentant (sorry for your sins) and by deciding to sin no more.

Review your life since your last confession. Searching your thoughts, words and actions for those that were not in line with God's command to love Him and one another. This is called an 'examination of conscience.'

My relationship with God

How do I pray?

- I pray only when I want something
- I pray because I have a personal relationship with God
- I do not pray

How do I attend Mass?

- I go only when someone makes me
- I go weekly, joining in, and respecting the Eucharist
- Bitterly, because I feel I have to
- I do not attend Mass

How do I use God's name?

- To express anger
- Carelessly
- Out of respect and love

How do I treat God's creation?

- I respect other people equally regardless of race, religion, or economic status
- I respect all human life from conception to natural death
- I am wasteful with the earth's resources, such as water

My relation towards other people

How do I treat family?

- I help when they are in need, even when it is not convenient for me
- I truthfully tell my parents where I am going and with whom
- I fight with or ignore family members and make no effort to make peace with them or ask for forgiveness.
- I forgive them when I feel they have hurt me

How do I treat sexuality?

- I use vulgar, suggestive, indecent, or offensive language and jokes
- I use people (in person, or in media) for my own physical pleasure
- I see sex as a precious gift from God and plan to save it for my future spouse

How do I treat my teachers?

- I do all my work, including homework, the best I can
- I am disruptive in class
- I am disrespectful behind their backs

How do I treat people that I don't know?

- I don't care because I'll never see them again
- I cheat or lie to get what I need
- I am kind and courteous
- I share what I have with others

How do I treat my friends?

- With love and respect
- I use them to gain popularity or gifts
- I make fun of them behind their backs, in texts, or online
- I accept and understand their differences
- I forgive them when they hurt me

My relationship with myself

How do I see myself?

- I see myself created in the image and likeness of God
- I focus on only what I don't like about myself
- I use drugs, tobacco or alcohol
- Take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

How seriously do I take my education?

- I neglect my studies
- I complete my assignments
- I participate in class and school activities

How do I make choices?

- Because everyone is doing it
- It's the easiest way for me to get out of the situation
- I want to be popular
- My relationship with God tells me it's the right thing to do

Guidelines for Young Adults



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

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 have not conformed to God's command to love Him and one another through His commandments and the laws of His Church. This is called an 'examination of conscience.'

Responsibilities to God

- Have I attended Mass each Sunday?
- Do I do my best to be attentive and participate in the celebration of the Mass?
- Do I pray regularly? How often?
- Do I read the Bible?
- Have I been rebellious toward God and His commandments?
- Have I misused the name of God by swearing and cursing?
- Do I ask for God's help to conquer sin and temptation?
- Do I ask for God's help to be more faithful to what He asks of me?
- Am I working daily to grow closer to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me conquer sin and temptation and be obedient to God's commands?
- Have I participated in anything that is of the occult: Ouija boards, fortune tellers, séances, channelling, or astrology? (This puts another 'god' before God.)

Responsibilities to others and to myself

- Am I willing to accept the help of others, or do I think I can do everything on my own?
- Do I try to be patient, kind, gentle, and self-controlled?
- Do I respect my parents, teachers, employers, and those in authority over me, or have I been rebellious or disobedient?
- Do I speak to them – and about them – with respect?
- Have I lied to or deceived my parents or others?
- Have I been arrogant, prideful, or stubborn?
- Am I thankful for the good things that others have, or do I get jealous or spiteful when I don't have the same things?
- Have I refused to forgive others?
- Do I treat my body and those of others with respect, or have I looked at others with lust, entertaining sexual fantasies?
- Do I look at pornography online, in movies, or in other media?
- In romantic relationships, do I try to protect my purity and that of the other?
- Do I try to push the boundaries of what he or she wants to do?
- Am I honest with myself in my relationships with people of the opposite sex?
- Have I been jealous of others?
- Do I look at, kiss, or touch out of lust or out of genuine care for the other?
- Have I had any sort of sexual relationship outside of the sacrament of marriage?
- Have I had an abortion or encouraged another to have one?
- Have I gossiped about others, or told lies to mock or bully someone else, either in person or online?
- Have I lied or cheated?
- Have I stolen anything? Have I paid it back?
- Have I been selfish or spiteful toward others?
- Have I gotten drunk or used drugs?
- When my conscience told me to do something good, did I do it or did I ignore it?

Guidelines for Married People



Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or 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 commandments and the laws of His Church. This is called an 'examination of conscience.'

Marriage

- Do I respect the dignity of the human body and the sanctity of Christian marriage?
- Do I show contempt for my body by neglecting to take care of my own health?
- Do I try to both talk and listen to my spouse with an open heart and open mind?
- Have I paid attention to my spouse's concerns, worries, and problems?
- Do I apologize and forgive quickly?
- Am I self-centered and demanding at home?
- Do I allow my spouse to be uniquely themselves, or do I try to control them?
- Have I been faithful to my marriage vows?
- Do I seek to nourish myself in my lifetime commitment to my spouse?
- Am I carrying on any kind of sexual relationship (real or virtual) with anyone other than my spouse?

Family and community

- Am I truthful and honest in all I do and say?
- Do I first look for the good in people I meet?
- Am I consistently fair and just with everyone in my life?
- Do I gossip about others – knowingly disrespecting them and damaging their reputations?
- Have I held resentments and anger against those with whom I work, with relatives or friends?
- Have I deliberately hurt others physically, injured their reputation or honor, or destroyed their material possessions?
- Do I respect all human life from conception to natural death?
- Have I abused any of God's gifts through my actions (examples: excessive eating, drinking, shopping, gambling, pornography, etc.)?
- Have I had a proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?
- Do I share my gifts and abundance with the less fortunate?
- Have I allowed the Gospel to influence my political and social opinions?
- Have I allowed Church teaching to guide my political and social opinions?

Faith

- Do I sincerely seek to be transformed by the will of God (Rom. 12:1-3), or am I Catholic in name only?
- Do I pray daily and listen to the Lord in prayer, or do I pray only when I want something?
- Do I show disrespect for God's name by misusing it in frustration, anger, or habit?
- Do I attend Sunday Mass every week, paying attention, participating in the hymns and responses, without leaving Mass early?
- Do I own and read a Bible?
- Have I tried to learn how to be a better Catholic spouse?
- Have I studied the truths of our faith and allowed them to increasingly become part of the way I think and act?
- Do my personal reflections, conversations, and reading reflect a sincere desire to know and to follow Jesus: the Way, the Truth, and the Life?
- Am I a good witness/example of what it means to be a Catholic?

Guidelines for Parents



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

Being 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 those which did not conform to God's command to love Him, and one another, through His commandments and the laws of His Church. This is called an 'examination of conscience.'

Family life

- Am I intentional about the time I spend with my spouse and my children?
- Do I take time to rest, step back, and reflect for and with my family?
- Do I honour my spouse and my children as the blessings from God that they are?
- Do I try to both talk and listen to my spouse and children with an open heart and open mind?
- Am I ungrateful for what my spouse or children do for me?
- Do I complain or criticize more than I compliment?
- Do I allow each of my children in my family to be uniquely themselves, or do I try to control them?
- Do I apologize and forgive quickly, and teach my kids to do the same?
- Am I self-centered and demanding?
- Do I live the Church's teaching on natural family planning?
- Am I bringing up my family in the Catholic faith?

- Do I show little or no interest in my children's faith and practice of it?
- Do I protect my children from media (TV, video games, movies, music, internet, and social media) that contains or promotes violence, sexual content, racism, or coarse or vulgar language?
- Do I honour my own parents and my in-laws?

Friends and community

- Am I truthful and honest in all I do and say?
- Do I always look for the best in people I meet, and teach my kids?
- Am I a source of hurt and division for those closest to me?
- Do I hold resentments and anger against those with whom I live or work?
- Have I deliberately hurt others (verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually)?
- Have I abused any of God's gifts through my actions (examples: excessive eating, drinking, shopping, gambling, pornography, etc.)?
- Have I allowed the Gospel to inform my political and social opinions?
- Have I allowed Church teaching to influence my political and social opinions?
- Do I give of my time, talent, and treasure to my parish and community?
- Have I had a proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?
- Do I share my gifts and abundance with the less fortunate?

Faith

- Have I taken up my responsibility as primary teacher of faith to my children?
- Have I tried to learn how to be a better Catholic parent?
- Do we maintain a constant prayer life in our home?
- Do I pray daily and listen to the Lord in prayer, or do I pray only when I want something?
- Do I attend Sunday Mass each week, pay attention, participate in the hymns and responses without leaving Mass early?
- Do I show disrespect for God's name by misusing it in frustration or anger?
- Do I own and read a Bible?
- Have I studied the truths of our faith and allowed them to increasingly become part of the way I think and act?
- Do I make fun of Christianity, of religion, or of the Church?
- Am I a good witness/example of what it means to be a Catholic Christian parent?

Guidelines for Older People



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

Begin with prayer, placing yourself in the presence of God, our loving Father. You want to find healing and forgiveness through being repentant and firmly resolving to sin no more.

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

Family

- Am I at peace with everyone in my family, and if not, have I done what I can to make peace?
- Do I try to both talk and listen with an open heart and open mind to my family members?
- Have I had a smile for family members and loved ones, or am I critical, hurting someone's feelings?
- Am I grateful to those who look after me and visit me?
- Have I paid attention to my family's concerns, worries, and problems, or do I prefer to talk about my own?
- Do I apologize and forgive quickly?
- Do I always look for the best in people I encounter?
- Do I expect too much from my family members?
- Do I respect that they have their own families, jobs, and responsibilities?
- Can I articulate my needs without trying to make my family members feel guilty?

Friends

- Have I been a busybody or unkind to a neighbor, either by my thoughts or by my actions?
- Do I encourage and bless others? Or do I criticize them and act disappointed in them?
- Do I listen to those around me and learn from them, or am I selfish and preoccupied with myself all the time?
- Do I give to the poor wherever they may be?
- Have I used my physical limitations as an excuse for laziness?
- Have I been immoderate in any activity: eating, drinking, smoking, gambling or watching too much TV?
- Do I criticize my doctor, caretaker, or children, for not serving me better.

Faith

- Do I give more of my time to prayer than I used to do, thanking God for everything, even my old age?
- Have I read any spiritual books or religious literature, or attended events to learn more about my faith?
- Do I believe that I have no need of confession, because I'm old and never leave my home?
- Do I pray for a stronger faith, a greater trust, and a deeper love for God above all?

Helpful Tips

- At this time in your life, you have a unique opportunity to grow in prayer and in holiness, and to devote more time to what is truly important, your relationship with God.
- Take time to grow in your faith and prayer life, even if health or circumstances confine you to your home, a nursing home, or a hospital — even if the confinement is temporary.
- Choose your reading material carefully, and be sure to include the Scriptures and some inspirational reading or music.
- Use this valuable time to reconnect with God in prayer – pray for your family, pray for forgiveness, pray for the conversion of a loved one, for our leaders, for world peace.
- Pray for the grace to acknowledge your shortcomings, and for the will to overcome them.

Guidelines for Those Who Are Sick



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

Begin with prayer, placing yourself in the presence of God, our loving Father. You want to find healing and forgiveness through being repentant and firmly resolving to sin no more.

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

Family

- Am I at peace with everyone in my family; if not, have I done what I can to make peace?
- Do I try to both talk and listen to my family members with an open heart and open mind?
- Do I smile at family members and loved ones, or am I critical, hurting someone's feelings?
- Am I grateful to those who look after me and visit me?
- Do I pay attention to my family's concerns, worries, and problems, or do I prefer to talk about my own?
- Do I apologize and forgive quickly?
- Do I always look for the best in people I encounter?
- Do I expect too much from my family members?
- Do you respect that they have their own families, jobs, and responsibilities?
- Can I articulate my needs without trying to make family members feel guilty?

Friends

- Have I been a busybody or unkind to a neighbor, either by my thoughts or by my actions?
- Do I encourage and bless others? Or do I criticize them and act disappointed in them?
- Do I listen to those around me and learn from them, or am I selfish and preoccupied with myself all the time?
- Do I give to the poor wherever they may be?
- Have I used my physical limitations as an excuse for laziness?
- Have I been immoderate in any activity: eating, drinking, smoking, gambling, shopping, or watching too much TV?
- Do I criticize my doctor, caretaker, children, for not serving me better?

Faith

- Do I give more of my time to prayer than I used to, thanking God for everything, even my illness and my life as it is now?
- Have I read any spiritual books or religious literature, or attended events to learn more about my faith?
- Do I believe I have no need of confession, because I'm old and never leave my home or hospital?
- Do I pray for a stronger faith, a greater trust, and a deeper love for God above all?

Helpful Tips

- At this stage in your life, you have a unique opportunity to grow in prayer and in holiness, and to devote more time to that which is truly important, your relationship with God.
- Take time to grow in your faith and prayer life, even if health or circumstances confine you to your home, a nursing home, or a hospital — even if the confinement is temporary.
- Choose your reading material carefully, and be sure to include the Scriptures and some inspirational reading or music.
- Use this valuable time to reconnect with God in prayer – pray for your family, for forgiveness, for conversion of a loved one, for our leaders, for world peace.
- Pray for the grace to acknowledge your shortcomings, and for the will to overcome them.

Guidelines for Those Who Have Been Away a Long Time or For an Adult Making a First Confession



Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession), especially the first time, 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 or review your life. The priest will help you if it is your first time. Search your thoughts, words, and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love Him, and one another, through His commandments 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?
- Do I sacrifice my own desires for the good of others?
- Do I try both to talk and to listen to my family members with an open heart?
- Have I paid attention to the concerns, worries, and problems of my family members and friends?
- Do I live up to the Church's teaching on natural 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?
- If I am single, am I living in conformity with the Church's teaching on chastity?

Friends

- Am I at peace with everyone; if not, have I done what I can to make peace?
- 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?
- Do I have resentments towards others?
- Have I had a proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?
- Do I share my gifts and abundance with the less fortunate?

Faith

- Am I lazy in the practice of my faith?
- Do I pray regularly, or only when I want something?
- Do I put my faith and trust in God alone, especially in time of temptations or trouble?
- Am I resolved to follow God's laws and the teachings of the Church to the best of my ability?
- Do I use the name of God with love and respect?
- Do I attend Sunday Mass, listen to the readings, participate in the hymns and responses without leaving Mass early?
- Do I thank God often for all His gifts and blessings?
- Am I doing anything to deepen my knowledge of the faith?

General questions

- Are there any major or serious things weighing on my heart?
- Do I have any recurring attitude, habit, or fault that is continually weighing me down? If so, what is it and why do I keep doing it?

Helpful Tips

- Regarding the number of times you have done something: if what you have done is something big and serious, then saying how often is important.
- Figure out what you find most difficult to change, and ask God and the priest for special help in this area.
- Try to understand why you act the way you do. For example, "I was arguing at home because I wanted my spouse's/parent's attention." Figuring out the reason will help you deepen your conscience as you mature in faith.

