

Review for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance or Confession) celebrates God's love and forgiveness. It is one of the Sacraments of Healing.

Preparation: We prepare for this Sacrament by looking back over our words and actions since our last confession. How did we live our lives in the light of Jesus' messages, His gospel? The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are good guides to this Examination of Conscience. Sin prevents us from living as followers of Jesus. Sin is a free decision to do what we know is wrong and to omit doing what we know is right. When we sin, we turn away from God and the teachings of the Church.

Mortal sins are serious sins that completely break off our relationship with God and with the Church community.

There are **three (3) conditions** necessary to make a sin mortal:

1. The act must be seriously wrong.
2. We must know that it is seriously wrong.
3. We must freely choose to do it.

Mortal sins must be confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Venial sins are less serious sins. These sins weaken our relationship with God and the Church community.

We confess venial sins because the act of naming them helps us recognize the areas in our life that need healing. The graces from this Sacrament help us to live better as we strive to be followers of Jesus.

Community Celebration of Reconciliation

We gather together as a community to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Introductory Rites: The priest greets us and invites us to pray for God's forgiveness.

Celebration of the Word of God: We listen to readings from the Bible.

Examination of Conscience: We examine our conscience and tell God we are sorry for our sins.

Rite of Reconciliation: We make a general confession of our sins. After praying the Act of Contrition and the Lord's Prayer, we go to a priest to make our individual confession and receive absolution.

Concluding Rite: The priest blesses us and tells us, "Go in Peace."

Individual Celebration of Reconciliation

Preparation: We prepare for this Sacrament by looking back over our words and actions since our last confession. How did we live our lives in the light of Jesus' messages, His gospel? The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are good guides to this Examination of Conscience. We then pray for God's forgiveness.

Going to Confession: After the priest welcomes you, both of you make the sign of the cross. Then you may tell the priest facts about your life, the last time you went to confession, any difficulties you might have trying to be a follower of Jesus, questions about your faith life.

Confession of Sins: Confess your sins. The priest then will offer suitable advice and give you an act of penance. This may be a certain prayer, act of self-denial or a work of mercy to complete.

Prayer of Sorrow: The priest will ask you to say an act of contrition.

Act of Contrition / Prayer of Sorrow

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.

Amen.

Absolution: The priest then extends his hands over your head and pronounces the words of absolution and makes the sign of the cross over your head.

Dismissal: The priest dismisses you with the command to go in peace.

Junior High Level

Examination of Conscience

Pause and silently think about things you may have done that hurt others.

My relationship with God

Do I pray often?

Do I worship God?

When I attend Mass, do I participate prayerfully?

My relationship with myself

Do I treat myself respectfully?

Do I try to develop myself as a person, caring for my mind by studying and making full use of my strengths, and the gifts and talents God has given me?

Do I take care of my health by eating well, exercising and getting enough rest and relaxation?

Do I abuse alcohol, other drugs, or leisure activities such as watching television or using computers etc.

Do I give in to discouragement and moodiness?

Do I honor the sacredness of sexuality by not using another person sexually and by reserving full sexual expression for marriage?

My relationships with others

Do I love and respect my parents or guardians and family members and try to resolve my differences with them peacefully?

Do I respect other persons in authority?

Have I treated people with respect, not with abuse, prejudice, or manipulation?

Am I truthful, fair and genuine in my dealings with others?

Have I hurt the reputation of another by speaking falsely about this person, or by spreading gossip or false rumors?

Do I respect my classmates and refrain from swearing, lying, fighting, gossiping, name-calling and bullying?

Do I respect others' property, refrain from destroying property, and refrain from stealing and cheating?

Do I help to make my surroundings, my home and my school happier places to live?

Do I share the gifts and talents that God has given me with others?

Act of Contrition / Prayer of Sorrow

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