



MARRIAGE & FAMILY LIFE  
OFFICE  
197 East Gay Street  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-241-2560  
familylife@columbuscatholic.org



*Confession*  
A Guide for Married Couples

Where God's Mercy and  
Healing Touch Your Life

Ps 103:11-12

"For as the heavens tower  
over the earth, so his mercy  
towers over those who fear  
him. As far as the east is  
from the west, so far has he  
removed our sins from us."

*You have received pardon and peace*

RECEIVE ABSOLUTION

PRAY ACT OF CONTRITION

RECEIVE YOUR PENANCE

CONFESS YOUR SINS

EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE

FIVE STEPS

*Confession*

**HOW TO RECEIVE  
THIS SACRAMENT**

(Don't worry; the priest will help you!)

1. Examine your conscience—take an honest look at your thoughts, actions, and priorities. Offer the times you failed to God, and make the commitment to do better with His help. Open up this pamphlet for an examination guide.
2. When you enter the confessional, make the Sign of the Cross, and say, "Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (state how long) since my last confession." State your sins simply and sincerely to the priest.
3. The priest will give you a penance—an action or prayer—to perform after Confession.

4. Then, say the Act of Contrition to express your commitment to return to God with all your heart:

**Act of Contrition:**

*O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and 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 do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.*

5. Spend some time performing your penance and thanking God for His love!
6. The priest will give you Absolution (setting you free from your sins) and

will conclude with: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." You respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."



"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 4:16

## EXAMINING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Have I failed to invest in my relationship with God? Did I stop praying?
- Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?
- Have I abused God's name?
- Have I received Jesus in Communion with mortal sin in my heart (having not confessed it)?
- Are there other "gods" that I put front and center in my life?
- Have I failed to trust in Him and His love for me?
- Have I rejected any of the Church's teachings?
- Have I participated in superstitious practices or spiritual experiences that exclude God (like Ouija boards, etc.)?
- Have I been ungrateful for God's gifts?

## EXAMINING MYSELF

- Have I overindulged in food, alcohol, entertainment, or technology?
- Have I been selfish in my motivations?
- Have I kept my priorities straight, or have I served myself first?
- Have I used my time poorly?
- Have I made material possessions too important in my life?
- Have I read books, listened to music, or watched movies that have led me away from God?
- Have I neglected physical, emotional, or spiritual self-care?

## EXAMINING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY SPOUSE

- Have I failed to prioritize my spouse, giving generously of my time and attention? Have I failed to prioritize my marriage?

- Have I avoided being open and truthful with my spouse?
- Have I been disrespectful or rude to him/her in thought or action?
- Have I held on to bitterness instead of forgiving? Did I seek forgiveness and admit my faults to my spouse?
- Have I flirted or acted inappropriately close to someone other than my spouse? Or have I betrayed my spouse in thoughts about someone else?
- Have I failed to listen to and affirm my spouse?
- Have I intentionally hurt him/her with my words or actions?
- Have I gossiped about my spouse?
- Have I engaged in pornography or masturbation?
- Have I used contraception or sterilization, changing the meaning of marital intimacy? Have I had an abortion?
- Have I used or manipulated my spouse for my own satisfaction?
- Have I failed to encourage and support my spouse in becoming the person God is calling him/her to be?

## EXAMINING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN

- Have I done my best to model a life of love and virtue for my children? Have I modeled the love of Christ in what I say and do?
- Have I been patient, kind, and respectful towards them? Have I told them that I love them?
- Have I been financially responsible for my family?
- Have I been generous with my time and attention?
- Have I been persistent in love that is both willing to discipline and show affection to my children?
- Have I been one in heart

and mind with my spouse in the upbringing of my children? Have I allowed my children to come between me and my spouse?

- Have I cared for the spiritual needs of my children? Have I tried to foster a Christian family where Jesus is Lord?
- Have I prayed with my children and shared the Gospel with them?

## EXAMINING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- Have I been negative in my thoughts towards others?
- Have I been dishonest? Have I taken anything that was not mine or cheated anyone?
- Have I been lazy at work?
- Have I failed to execute my commitments?
- Have I failed to be generous with my time and resources?
- Have I been disrespectful to my parents?
- Have I held on to feelings of anger or hatred?
- Have I been envious or judgmental of others?
- Have I hurt the reputation of others?
- Have I allowed the Gospel to influence my political and social opinions?
- Have I had proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?



"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

*Psalm 51:10*