Encountering Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

A Guide to Making a Thorough Examination of Conscience and a Good Confession

8. **You shall not Bear False Witness Against Your Neighbor** (Exodus 20:16)
   - Have I lied?
   - Have I spread gossip, lies or rumors about someone?
   - Have I judged others unfairly?
   - Am I guilty of detraction, that is, making known the faults of others?
   - Have I revealed secrets that were entrusted to me?
   - Have I pretended to be someone I am not?

9. **You Shall Not Covet Your Neighbor's Wife** (Exodus 20:17)
   - Have I been disrespectful of the sacrament of marriage between one man and one woman?
   - Have I treated others as objects, using them for my own pleasure?
   - Have I freely and deliberately entertained lustful thoughts regarding another?
   - Have I failed to respect another's personal boundaries?
   - Have I dressed immodestly?

10. **You Shall Not Covet Your Neighbor's Goods** (Exodus 20:17)
    - Have I been greedy, jealous, or resentful about what others have?
    - Have I wished ill on others?
    - Have I failed to be grateful for what I have?
    - Have I wasted food or goods?
    - Have I failed to support my parish or the poor and the needy?

**Traditional Way of Going to Confession**

The priest will welcome you and together you make the Sign of the Cross.

Then make your confession by: saying...

*Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [give days, weeks, months or years] since my last confession.*

Next, list all of your sins, and conclude with...

*For these and all of my sins I am sorry.*

The priest may then offer some spiritual counsel to you and will assign an act of penance.

The priest will then invite you to make an Act of Contrition such as:

*Math 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.*

The priest will extend his hand over you and pronounce the words of absolution. You respond with, *Amen.*

The priest will then dismiss you, often with a prayer. If possible complete your penance soon after your confession.

*You can always tell the priest you are not sure what to do and he will help you out!*
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR TEENS

Examining your conscience is an important part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and should be done prior to entering the confessional as part of preparing to make a good confession.

There are many different ways to examine your conscience, but all should be focused on recalling where in the time since our last confession we, through our thoughts, actions, and inactions, have failed to love Lord and those around us. It is always a good idea to start an examination of conscience with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking that we will be able to see our sins and be sorry for them.

This particular examination of conscience uses the 10 Commandments. Answering, “Yes” to any of the questions, indicates a sin that may need to be confessed. Note: No examination of conscience is comprehensive, and a penitent should always prayerfully expand on them while reviewing past conduct.

1. You Shall Not Have Other Gods Besides Me. (Exodus 20:3)
   - Have I chosen to put other things (popularity, TV, video games, social media, sports, etc.) before God?
   - Have I neglected my friendship with God by not setting aside time for daily prayer?
   - Do I only pray when I need something?
   - Have I denied my faith before others?
   - Have I been involved in superstitious or occult practices (witchcraft, ouija boards, fortune tellers, astrology)?
   - Have I ignored a part or parts of Church teaching?

2. You Shall Not Take the Name of the Lord, Your God, in Vain. (Exodus 20:7)
   - Have I used God’s name carelessly, in anger or in surprise (saying “Oh my God” when not in prayer)?
   - Have I spoken the name of the Lord as a swear (“God dammit,”)?
   - Have I lied under oath?
   - Have I broken a promise made before God?
   - With my words, have I disrespected God, Mary, the saints, or those dedicated to God?
   - Have I used profanity (blasphemous or obscene language)?

3. Remember to Keep Holy the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:8)
   - Have I, purposely and of my own fault, missed Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation?
   - Have I been disrespectful during the liturgy?
   - Have I failed to participate fully in Mass?
   - Have I received communion while in a state of mortal sin?
   - Have I failed to set Sunday apart as a day for God and rest?

4. Honor Your Father and Mother (Exodus 20:12)
   - Have I disobeyed or disrespected my parents? Have I lied to or stolen from them?
   - Have I failed to let my parents know I love them and am grateful for what they do for me?
   - Have I failed to respect others in positions of authority (e.g. teachers, coaches, law enforcement, etc.)?

5. You Shall Not Kill (Exodus 20:13)
   - Have I been involved in murder? Have I had or counseled another to have an abortion?
   - Have I used physical violence against another person or harmed another with my words through insults?
   - Have I harmed my own body through self-injury, drug, or alcohol abuse?
   - Have I caused or helped another person to sin?
   - Have I held a grudge against or tried to get even with others?
   - Have I refused to forgive someone when asked to?
   - Have I hurt another’s reputation by deliberately spreading rumors?
   - Have I put others down to feel better about myself?

6. You Shall Not Commit Adultery (Exodus 20:14)
   - Have I had sex with or engaged another in sexually arousing activities? Have I used contraception?
   - Have I masturbated?
   - Have I watched pornography?
   - Have I ever freely and deliberately entertained impure thoughts?
   - Have I engaged in sexual remarks, humor, etc.

7. You Shall Not Steal (Exodus 20:15)
   - Have I taken something that rightfully belongs to another?
   - Have I failed to do work I am being paid for?
   - Have I lied or cheated to get what I want or need?
   - Have I been irresponsible with my money or time?