

At Confession

You can take this leaflet in with you to confession.

Begin by making the sign of the Cross with the priest. Then say:

Bless me Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was.....ago (say roughly how long) and these are my sins.

Now tell your sins simply, in your own words. When you have finished, let the priest know. You can use words like this if you wish:

I am sorry for all these sins, and for any that I cannot now remember.

The priest will now speak to you, and then ask you to do a penance.

You can ask him questions if you want. He will ask you to say an act of contrition (sorrow). Here is one that you can say:

O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.

Wait while the priest says the words of absolution, whereby Christ forgives and frees you from your sins:

“God the Father of mercies, through the death & resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and *[here, make the sign of the cross over yourself]*
I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

After Confession

If the priest asked you to say some prayers for your penance, say these now.

Pray to God thanking Him for the gift of forgiveness. Make up your mind to try to love God with all your heart and soul and mind, and to try to love your neighbour as yourself. Here is a prayer you can say if you wish:

Lord my God, I thank you for the great gift of your forgiveness. I will now try to love you with all my heart and soul and mind, and I will try to love others too. Help me by your holy grace.



Remember to try to come to Confession often - once a month - so that you can meet Jesus and receive His grace. Think of ‘grace’ as the sunshine of the soul, which we need to grow spiritually.

The Sacrament Of Confession

A guide for adults



This leaflet is designed to help you prepare to go to Confession. You may take a copy home to keep if you wish.

Before Confession

Before you meet with Jesus and receive the sacrament spend some time preparing yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive the sacrament well.

Next, make a careful examination of conscience. To do that, think carefully about your life and the things you need to ask forgiveness for [see next page].

When you have thought of the sins you need to confess, you could use this prayer if you wish:

Merciful God, I humbly thank you for your loving kindness to me at all times, especially your patience and long-suffering with me, a wretched sinner. It is thanks to your great mercy alone that I have not fallen further away from you by committing even more serious sins. Father, I beg you receive me back now as I struggle to return to you. I earnestly desire to be truly sorry for my sins, and to use the time given to me in the future to make up for the sins I have committed in the past.

Give me light, my God, to see what sins I have fallen into since my last confession, and the grace to confess them humbly. I ask you to help me to be truly sorry for them. Grant me perfect sorrow so that I may receive your forgiveness, and so be prepared to meet you joyfully in my final judgement.

Examination of Conscience

First try to remember how long it is since you last went to confession - a rough idea will do.

Then ask yourself how you have offended God by any sins against Him, and by any sins against others. A sin is any thought, word, action or omission against God's law which you freely consented to. You can use the following questions if they help you, but remember it is *your* confession, and you need to think how you personally have sinned, and how you personally need God's help.

Sins against God

Have I rejected my faith, been ashamed of it, or refused to find out more about it?
Have I neglected my daily prayers, or said them carelessly?
Have I failed to trust in God by dabbling in the occult, or put my trust in fortune tellers/horoscopes etc.?
Have I taken God's Holy Name in vain?
Have I shown disrespect for holy things, places or people?
Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holydays through my own fault?
Have I let myself be distracted at Mass, or distracted others?
Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin?
Have I received Holy Communion without proper reverence, or thanksgiving?

For spouses

Have I neglected to foster the warmth of my love and affection for my spouse?
Have I prolonged disagreements through resentment or failing to apologise when I have been in the wrong?
Have I mistreated my spouse verbally, emotionally or physically?
Have I used artificial means of birth control?
Have I been unfaithful to my spouse in any way?

For parents

Have I neglected to teach my children to pray?
Have I neglected the religious education of my children?
Have I failed to bring my children to Sunday Mass?
Have I given bad example in any way?
Have I failed to exercise vigilance over what my children read, see on TV or the internet?
Have I been harsh or overbearing with my children?

Sins against myself and others

Have I been impatient, angry or jealous?
Have I brooded over injuries or refused to forgive?
Have I taken part in, or encouraged, abortion, euthanasia or any other means of taking human life?
Have I been verbally or physically violent to others?
Have I hurt anyone by speaking badly about them?
Have I betrayed confidences without good reason or revealed things simply to hurt others?
Have I judged others rashly?
Have I been drunk or used illegal drugs?
Have I driven dangerously or inconsiderately?
Have I spoken in a obscene way?
Have I looked at obscene pictures, films or books?
Have I been involved in any impure behaviour on my own or with another?
Have I been vain, proud or self-seeking?
Have I told lies to excuse myself, to hurt others or to make myself look important?
Have I stolen anything?
Have I failed to contribute to the support of the Church in proportion to my means?
Have I been disobedient, rude or insolent to those in lawful authority over me?
Have I been harsh, overbearing or unfair to those under my authority?
Have I cheated my employers or employees?
Have I misused or damaged the property of others?
Have I set my heart on possessing things?
Have I given scandal or bad example?
Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any way?
Have I been lazy at work, study or domestic duties?

Has it been a long time?

If it's been a long time since your last confession, don't be put off! Just mention this to the priest - he will understand, and will be glad to help you make a good confession.