

Guide to Confession for Adults

Confession was instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of mortal sins committed after Baptism (John 20:22-23), that a soul, having lost sanctifying grace by committing mortal sin, might be restored to a state of grace from a state of mortal sin, leading to eternal damnation. To make a good confession, mortal sins ought to be confessed according to number (how many times) and kind (what kind of sin), to the best of your recollection. Generally, sins against the first three Commandments are objectively mortal, as these sins are *direct* offenses against God, Whose dignity is infinite. The last seven Commandments may or may not be mortal, as these sins are direct offenses against Man, who is made in the image of God, but only *indirect* offenses against God Himself. Thus, the last seven Commandments, depending upon degree and severity, may only be venial, although sins against the sixth Commandment, specifically sexual sins or “sins of the flesh”, have traditionally been regarded as objectively mortal, as for example, revealed by Our Lady of Fatima.

1st Commandment

- Have I intentionally withheld confessing a mortal sin in a previous Confession, and if so, what sin?
- Have I denied the existence of God (atheism)?
- Have I sinned against faith, by rejecting a defined teaching of the Church (heresy)?
- Have I been a member of a group strictly forbidden to Catholics (Freemasons)?
- Have I been involved in occult activity (ouija board, palm-reading, crystals, fortune-telling, horoscopes, mediums, channeling, automatic writing, wizardry or witchcraft, yoga, New Age healing techniques, Reiki, Enneagram, Satanism)?

2nd Commandment

- Have I spoken God’s Holy Name as a curse word (blasphemy)?

3rd Commandment

- Have I skipped Holy Mass on either a Sunday or a holy day of obligation?
- Have I received Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin (sacrilege)?
- Have I received Holy Communion without belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic Sacrament?

4th Commandment

- Have I failed to respect my parents?
- Have I failed to care for my parents in their old age?
- Have I failed to provide good moral and religious example for my family?
- Have I failed to pray with/for my children?
- Have I failed to provide for the material needs of my family?

5th Commandment

- Have I committed murder?
- Have I committed either chemical abortion (birth control pills) or surgical abortion (medical procedure)?
- Have I been involved in so-called “mercy killing” (euthanasia)?
- Have I attempted suicide?
- Have I been prejudiced?
- Have I refused to forgive somebody?
- Have I purposely gotten drunk, used tobacco immoderately, or sold or taken illegal drugs?
- Have I operated a vehicle recklessly or while intoxicated?
- Have I eaten significantly too much food (gluttony)?

6th and 9th Commandments

- Have I entertained impure thoughts (lust)?
- Have I viewed immoral pictures or images (pornography)?
- Have I dressed immodestly, especially in church?
- Have I told impure jokes, or engaged in impure conversations?
- Have I committed unnatural sex acts that do not lead to possible conception, thwarting the will of the Creator with regard to the sexual act (masturbation, mutual masturbation, contraception, oral sex, anal sex)?
- Have I committed pre-marital sex (fornication)?
- Have I committed adultery?
- Have I committed sex acts with a relative (incest)?
- Have I committed sex acts with an animal (bestiality)?
- Have I paid for, or received money for, sex acts (prostitution)?
- Have I sexually abused somebody (child molestation, unwanted touching or advances, seduction, rape)?
- Have I used means to *prevent* conception (vasectomy, tubal ligation, condoms, pills, devices, withdrawal)?
- Have I used immoral means *for* conception (in vitro fertilization)?
- Have I attempted Marriage outside of the Catholic Church?
- Have I “lived in mortal sin”, by living with my spouse prior to Marriage (cohabitation)?

7th and 10th Commandments

- Have I stolen property (theft) or damaged property (vandalism)?
- Have I gambled excessively?
- Have I cheated in business or in games?
- Have I made a false claim to my insurance company?
- Have I been materialistic (greed)?
- Have I been envious of somebody’s possessions?
- Have I neglected the poor?

8th Commandment

- Have I lied?
- Have I lied under oath, calling upon God to witness to a lie (perjury)?
- Have I revealed confidential information?
- Have I spoken unkindly to others?
- Have I revealed the faults of somebody unnecessarily (detraction)?
- Have I spread lies about somebody (slander)?
- Have I spread rumors (gossip)?
- Have I failed to speak in defense of, or have I spoken mockingly of, the Faith and therefore of God Himself?

Format for Confession

1. Sign of the Cross
2. “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, it has been _____ months since my last Confession.”
3. Confess your sins
4. Priest assigns your penance.
5. Pray an Act of Contrition (see example below).
6. Priest prays the Prayer of Absolution.

Act of Contrition

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.