

Steps to a Good Confession

1. **Examine your conscience** by asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the ways that you have offended God, others and yourself.
2. **Ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to be sorry** for your sins because without true sorrow, or a good confession, you will not make an effort to break sinful habits.
3. **Make up your mind not to sin again.** During your confession, pray the Act of Contrition with your heart. You are saying to Jesus that you will seek to stop sinning by cooperating with the power of His grace received in the Sacrament.
4. **Confess your sins to the priest concisely and to the point.** First confess any serious sins, referred to as mortal sins, because these serious sins break your relationship with Jesus. For a sin to be mortal, it would involve grave / serious matter, full understanding of the evil of the act, and making the decision to commit the sin. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1857 hereafter CCC) Then confess your venial sins, which are less serious but still offend our Heavenly Father, though venial sins do not completely destroy your relationship with God.
5. **Pray or do the penance** that the priest gives you, after leaving the confessional.

How to Confess Your Sins

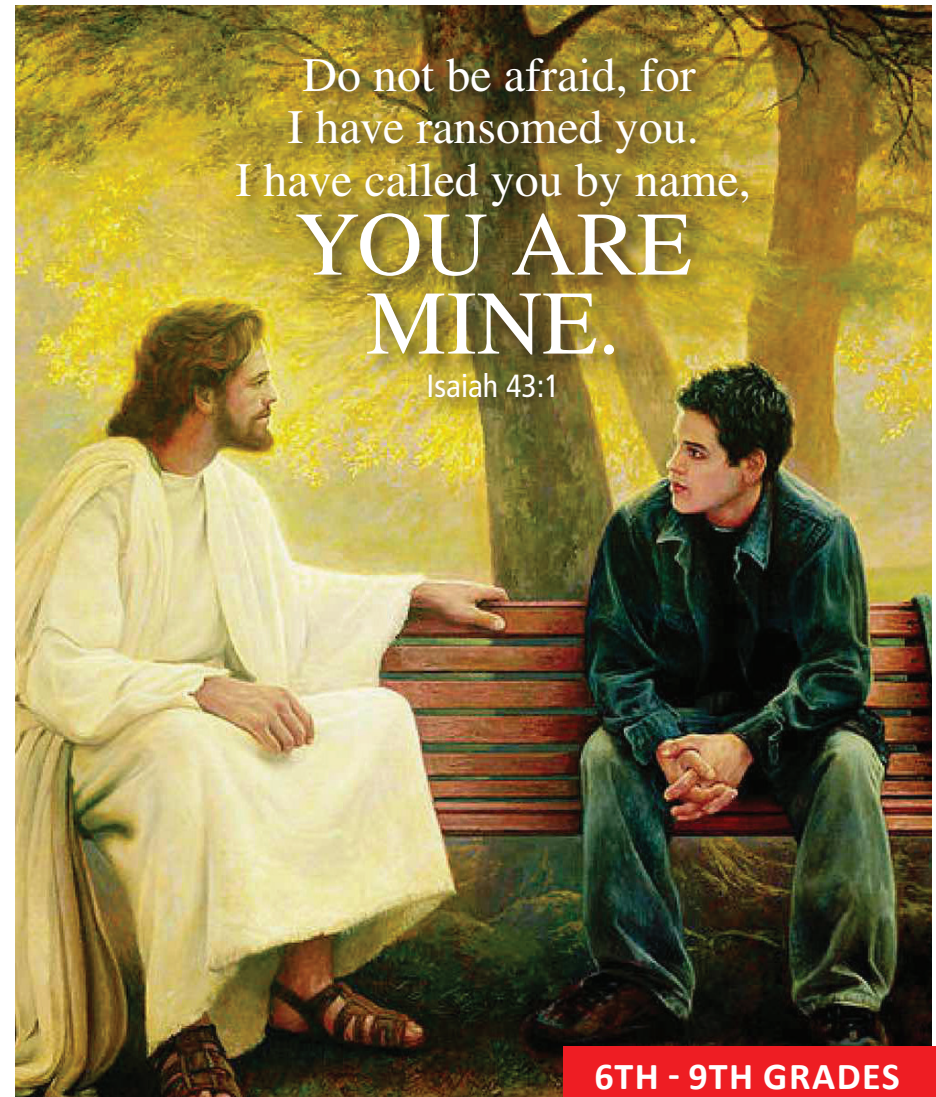
1. The priest welcomes me. I make the Sign of the Cross.
2. I tell the priest how long it has been since I made my last confession. I say, **“Bless me Father for I have sinned, it has been _____ since my last confession.”**
3. I confess my sins and say **“For these and all the sins I cannot remember, I am truly sorry.”**
4. I listen to what the priest tells me.
5. I pray the Act of Contrition.
Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. And I detest all my sins because of Your just punishments. But most of all because they offend You my God who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolved with the help of Your grace to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.
6. I listen closely to the Prayer of Absolution: God the Father of mercies, through the Death and Resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the mystery of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Make the Sign of the Cross.) I respond **“Amen.”**
7. The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace. I respond **Thanks be to God. Thank you, Father.**

After Confession

1. Pray the penance the priest has given me.
2. Thank God for forgiving my sins.
3. Ask God each day to help me live as an adopted son or daughter of my Heavenly Father.

Receiving Forgiveness and Healing in the Sacrament of Penance

Also known as Confession and the Sacrament of Reconciliation



6TH - 9TH GRADES

A reason that young people may avoid confession is a fear that the priest will think badly of them. This is certainly not the case as a priest knows that those approaching the Sacrament of Penance have already received grace from God to acknowledge the need for forgiveness and healing.



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LA CROSSE**

Examination of Conscience

1. "I am the Lord, your God; you shall not worship other gods." (Exodus 20:2,3)

- Does God have the first place in my life? Or have I put other things before God, such as money, clothes, sports, electronics, social media, music, pleasure, peer approval?
- Did I start and finish each day with prayer? Did I pray only when I needed something?
- Have I made a serious effort to know my Catholic Faith well, and am I willing to defend it?
- Did I accept the false idea that one religion is just as good as another?
- Have I denied my Faith before others?
- Have I believed in horoscopes, used an Ouija board, or engaged in other superstitious practices? (Grave Matter. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph 2117)

2. "You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain." (EX 20:7)

- Have I used the name of God thoughtlessly, or in cursing? What am I saying to God when I use His name irreverently or loosely?
- Have I blasphemed by making fun of or mocked God, Jesus, Mary or the Church, or using God's name in anger or in vain, or by using words of hatred or defiance against God? (Grave matter, CCC 2148, 2146. Grave or serious matter is considered a mortal sin if their is full knowledge of the evil of the act and a decision to commit the sin.)
- Have I used bad language?

3. "Keep holy the Lord's Day." (EX 20:8)

- Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault? Have I refused to go the Mass? (Grave matter, CCC 2181)
- Have I received Holy Communion after missing Mass or other serious sin. (Grave matter, CCC 2120, 1385)
- Have I fully, consciously and actively participated in Holy Mass, or just gone through the motions? Am I just a spectator wanting to be entertained?
- Do I talk and joke with others when at Mass?

- Have I kept the Eucharistic Fast of one hour? Do I chew gum or eat at Mass?
- Have I used Sunday as a day to honor God through prayer, spending time with my family and serving those in need? Did I do work on Sunday that was not necessary?
- Did I fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday? Did I abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent?

4. "Honor your father and your mother." (EX 20:12)

- Did I obey my parents and those in authority (teachers, coaches, principal, police, etc.) and do what they told me to do? Did I continue to do things after I was told "No"?
- Did I talk back to my parents? Did I yell or say mean things to them?
- Did I lie or hide things from my parents?
- Did I watch or read things my parents told me not to because they are not appropriate?
- Have I disrespected my family members or treated them with little attention, or reacted proudly when corrected by them? Did I cause tension out of selfishness?
- Did I complete my homework and help out at home to the best of my ability?
- Have I set aside friends for a selfish reason?

5. "You shall not kill." (EX 20:13)

- Have I been mean to others or bullied them?
- Did I get angry easily or lose my temper? Did I act or speak rudely or arrogantly toward others? Did I lead others to not be friends with someone I do not like?
- Did I insult or make fun of others or try to hurt others by my words or actions? Did I hate anyone? (Grave matter, CCC 2303)
- Did I refuse to forgive someone? Did I hold a grudge or try to get even with anyone?
- Have I vaped, done drugs, allowed myself to become intoxicated or done other things that damage my health and numb my conscience, preventing me from making good decisions? (Grave matter, CCC 2290, 2291)

- Have I lead others into sin? Have I given bad example in a serious matter? (Grave matter, CCC 2284)

6. "You shall not commit adultery."

9. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." (EX 20:14, 17)

- Have I remained chaste and pure in mind and body, as God asks of me? Have I had impure or lustful thoughts that I intentionally did not disregard or pray away?
- Did I dress in a modest and self-respecting way? Did I like to show off parts of my body? Have I been a temptation of sin to others by acting or dressing immodestly?
- Did I take care of my body by eating healthy food and getting proper sleep and exercise?
- Have I treated others as objects in my words, thoughts or actions rather than as a child of God? Have I kissed someone lustfully?
- Have I watched inappropriate movies or programs, that include violence, bad language or using other persons disrespectfully? Have I told inappropriate jokes?
- Did I respect other people's privacy or have I given into curiosity about things that are forbidden to me?
- Am I jealous of my friends? Have I used others to gain something for myself?
- Have I engaged in inappropriate or disrespectful conversations? Have I deliberately viewed pornography? (Grave matter, CCC 2354)
- Have I had impure or lustful desires that I intentionally did not disregard or pray away?
- Am I seeking a identity that is different from the way that God designed me?

7. "You shall not steal."

10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods?" (EX 20:15, 17)

- Have I taken anything that did not belong to me without asking permission? Did I return what I took?
- Have I taken anything of value through

shoplifting? (Grave matter, CCC 2409)

- Did I knowingly receive stolen goods?
- Have I cheated on a test?
- Have I refused to admit that I was wrong?
- Have I thought more about other people's faults instead of looking at my own?
- Have I been lazy with school work or chores? Have I wasted time, goods, food or money?
- Have I worked during the time for which I was paid?
- Have I been envious of people who have lots of things? Have I been greedy? Have I been selfish with material possessions?
- Did I judge people by the clothes they wear or the things they own?

8. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (EX 20:16)

- Have I told lies? Have I told lies to hide what I have done wrong or to hurt others?
- Have I told a malicious lie intended to seriously damage the reputation of another? (Grave matter, CCC 2477)
- Have I said things to make myself look better to others?
- Have I appreciated and stood for the truth?
- Have I broken promises? Have I talked behind someone's back or spread rumors (gossip)? Have I said something that damages another's reputation?
- Have I used twitter, snapchat or any other form of social media or app in ways that are hurtful or damaging to others?

Jesus knows me and is pleased that I am here. He gave His life for me on the Cross so that my sins could be forgiven. There is nothing for me to fear. I want to trust Jesus; He is my Savior. When I go to confession, Jesus pardons me, strengthens me to love God and my neighbor more and gives me His peace and joy.