



Confession for Teens

a guide for young people of
secondary school age

(You may take a copy home to keep if you wish)

Before Confession

Before you receive the sacrament, spend some time preparing. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive the sacrament. Here is a prayer that help you prepare:

**O God, I love you. I wish to love you more every day.
Help me to see how I have sinned.
Help me to be sorry for my sins.
Help me to make up my mind to be better in the future.**

Examination of conscience

Next make a careful “examination of conscience”. To do that, think carefully about your life and the things for which you need forgiveness. The following questions and prompts can help you with that:

First try to remember how long it is since you last went to Confession. You only need to remember *roughly* how long it is. Then ask yourself how you have offended God by any sins against him (1), against others (2) or yourself (3).

As you read through the questions, always remember it is *your* confession and you need to think how you personally have sinned and how you personally need God's help.

(1) Love of God

Have I rejected my faith or refused to find out more about it? Have I forgotten my daily prayers or said them badly? Have I experimented with the occult or put my trust in fortune tellers or horoscopes?

Have I shown disrespect for God or any holy things, places or people? Have I missed Sunday Mass when I could have gone? Have I let myself be distracted at Mass or have I distracted others? When I have received Holy Communion, have I done so without reverence, care or thanksgiving?

(2) Love of others

Have I been unhelpful at home? Have I failed to try to understand my parents and talk with them? Have I upset the peace of my home for selfish reasons? Have I sulked or been sarcastic instead of asking for help? Have I treated teachers or other adults with disrespect? Have I played unfairly at games or sports? Have I been violent? Have I taken part in fights? Have I hurt anyone by speaking badly about them? Have I betrayed secrets or told things simply to hurt others? Have I been involved in any impure behaviour on my own or with someone else? Have I been cruel in response to someone else's love? Have I told lies to excuse myself, to hurt others or to make myself look more important? Have I stolen anything? Have I misused or damaged the property of others? Have I been jealous of others—of their looks, their popularity, their good work? Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any way?



(3) Love of self

Do I set my heart on possessing things? Have I been taking care of my body, of my schedule for free time and (school) work, of my property, of my room? Have I lost control when I have been angry? Have I done my (school) work properly? Have I looked at obscene images or videos? Have I spoken in an obscene way?

A few words of encouragement (from a priest)

My dear young person. I know that going to confession is not easy and you may be



embarrassed. But don't worry— just say what is in your heart and give it over to Jesus. He will strengthen and protect you. It is a wonderful sacrament of pardon and peace and well worth the effort. You are protected by the "Seal of Confession" so that what you say is kept safe. Nobody will ever know except you and Jesus (and he knows anyway!)

Most of all, cherish your faith as a great gift. Grow in the love of God to become the person he has made you to be. There is only one of you so make sure to be the best that you can be. Now that you have come to the sacrament once, come regularly and grow in wisdom, faith and the love of God.

We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world!

In the Confessional

You can take this leaflet in with you to Confession.

If there is a choice, you may kneel behind the grille so that the priest cannot see you; otherwise, you can go face to face.

Begin by making the sign of the cross with the priest.

Then you can speak in your own words or you can 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 these words:

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

The priest will now talk to you and ask you to do a penance.

You can ask him questions if you want.

He will ask you to say an "act of contrition". Here is one you can say:

O 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 intend, with your help, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

Wait while the priest says the prayer of absolution (where Christ forgives you all your sins). Make the sign of the cross as the priest says:

*I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

After Confession

Take some time to reflect on the fact that all your sins are now forgiven. What an incredible gift!

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

Make up your mind to try and love God with all your heart and soul and mind, your neighbour as yourself. Maybe think of a plan for avoiding certain sins in the future. Here is a prayer you can say before going home:

O God, I thank you for forgiving me my sins.

**I will try now to love you with all my heart and soul and mind
and I will try to love others too.**

Help me by your grace, be patient with me, stay close to me.



Remember to come to Confession often so that you can meet Jesus and receive his grace. We can think of grace as the "sunshine of the soul".

This leaflet is based on models prepared by Fr Tim Finnigan