

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 and in your own words. When you have finished let the priest know. You could use words like this if you wish:

I am sorry for all these sins and for any that I can't now remember.

The priest may 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 – a prayer of sorrow. Here is one that you might 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 prays the words of absolution over you – through these words Jesus Christ forgives and frees you from your sins.

These are the words:

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 ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace and [here make the sign of the cross] 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 more and more because of His goodness to you. Here is a prayer you can use if you wish:

Lord my God, I thank you for the great gift of your forgiveness. I thank you for your loving-patience with me. I will now try to love you with all my heart and to love my neighbour as myself.
Please help me with your grace

Come to Confession regularly – so that you can meet Jesus and receive the grace of His Holy Spirit. Think of this grace as the sunshine of the soul which will help you grow closer to God.



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION



A Guide for Adults

This leaflet is designed to help you prepare to go to Confession.





BEFORE CONFESSION

Before you meet with Jesus and receive His forgiveness through the sacrament spend a few minutes preparing yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to receive the sacrament well. You may like to use this prayer:

Holy Spirit, give me light to see myself clearly and to know my faults.

Give me help to be able to confess my sins honestly.

Give me the gift of true sorrow for the damage I have done.

Give me grace to prepare my heart to receive the forgiveness I am promised.

Most of all give me joyful freedom from my faults and a desire to love God more and more.

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

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 which you freely consented to and which is displeasing to God. You could use the following questions if they help but remember it is your confession and you need to think about how you personally have sinned – so that you, personally, can be forgiven and receive God's help.

For Married People

Have I neglected to foster warmth, love and affection for my spouse?

Have I prolonged disagreements through resentment or by failing to apologise?

Have I mistreated my spouse verbally, emotionally or physically?

Have I been unfaithful to my spouse in any way?

For Parents

Have I tried to teach and encourage my children to pray?

Have I tried to be patient and loving with my children?

Have I given bad example in any way?

Have I been harsh or overbearing with my children?

Sins against myself and others

Have I been selfish about my own needs?

Have I tried to live for others and put their interests first?

Have I been impatient, angry or jealous?

Have I brooded over past hurts and refused to forgive?

Have I hurt anyone by speaking badly about them?

Have I betrayed someone's confidence or revealed things simply to hurt others?

Have I been rash in judging people?

Have I driven carelessly or inconsiderately?

Have I been thankful for what God has given me?

Have I eaten or drunk too much?

Have I over indulged with television or the internet to the neglect of others?

Have I looked at obscene images or films?

Have I not respected myself or others by relating to them in an impure way?

Have I told lies?

Have I stolen anything?

Have I cheated my employer or employees? Have I been lazy?

Have I set my heart on possessions, money or a career?

Has it been a long time?

If it's been a long time since you went to 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.