

An Examination of Conscience for Adults

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.

- Have I treated people, or things as more important than God?
- Do I give God time every day in prayer?
- Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart?
- Have I been involved with superstitious practices, or have I been involved with the occult?
- Do I seek to live by God's Word as taught by the Church?
- Have I ever received Communion in the state of mortal sin?
- Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession, or have I withheld a mortal sin from the priest in Confession?
- Are there other "gods" in my life? Money, security, power, people, etc.?

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

- Have my words, actively or passively, put down God, the Church, or people?
- Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?
- Have I been angry with God?
- Have I wished evil upon any other person?
- Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- Have I missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?
- Do I avoid, when possible, work that impedes worship to God, joy for the Lord's Day, and proper relaxation of mind and body?
- Do I look for ways to spend time with family on Sunday?
- Have I tried to observe Sunday as a day of rest?
- Do I do needless work on Sunday?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

- Do I show my parents due respect?
- Do I seek to maintain good communication with my parents where possible?
- Do I criticize them for lacking skills I think they should have?
- Do I honor and obey my parents?
- Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?
- Have I given my family good religious example?
- Do I try to bring peace into my home life?
- Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

5. You shall not kill.

- Have I harmed another through physical, verbal, or emotional means, including gossip or manipulation of any kind?
- Have I had an abortion or encouraged or helped anyone to have an abortion?
- Have I physically harmed anyone?
- Have I abused alcohol or drugs?
- Did I give scandal to anyone, leading him or her into sin?
- Have I been angry or resentful?
- Have I harbored hatred in my heart?
- Have I mutilated myself through any form of sterilization?
- Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?
- Have I engaged, in any way, in sins against human life such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization?
- Have I participated in or approved of euthanasia?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

- Have I respected the physical and sexual dignity of others and of myself?
- Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?
- Have I engaged in any sexual activity outside of marriage?
- Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control in my marriage?
- Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?
- Have I been guilty of masturbation?
- Do I seek to control my thoughts and imaginations?
- Have I viewed pornography?
- Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as mere objects?
- Do I seek to be chaste in my thoughts, words, actions?
- Am I careful to dress modestly?

7. You shall not steal.

- Have I taken or wasted time or resources that belonged to another?
- Have I stolen what is not mine?
- Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?
- Do I waste time at work, school, and home?
- Do I gamble excessively, denying my family of their needs?
- Do I pay my debts promptly?
- Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?
- Have I cheated anyone out of what is justly theirs, for example creditors, insurance companies, corporations, government?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I gossiped, told lies, or embellished stories at the expense of another?
- Do I speak badly of others behind their back?
- Am I sincere in my dealings with others?
- Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?
- Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?
- Have I injured the reputation of others by slander?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse.

- Have I honored my spouse with my full affection and exclusive love?
- Have I consented to impure thoughts?
- Have I caused impure thoughts by impure reading, movies, television, conversation, or curiosity?
- Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?
- Have I behaved in an inappropriate way with members of the opposite sex: flirting, being superficial, etc.?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Am I content with my own means and needs, or do I compare myself to others unnecessarily?
- Am I jealous of what other people have?
- Do I envy the families or possessions of others?
- Am I greedy or selfish?
- Are material possessions the purpose of my life?

Before Confession:

- Prepare by making an Examination of Conscience
- A prayer before Confession:

Dear Jesus,
help me to make a good Confession,
help me to find out my sins,
help me to be sorry for them,
help me to make up my mind not to sin again.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, and forgive me.
Mary, my mother, pray for me.

During Confession:

- Greeting: Make the Sign of the Cross in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- Say: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been ____ (weeks, months, years) since my last confession."
- Confess your sins using the Examination of Conscience. If you are unsure of what to say, ask the priest for help. When you are finished, conclude with these or similar words: "I am sorry for these and all my sins."
- Penance: The priest will propose an act of penance. The penance might be a prayer, a work of mercy, or an act of charity. He might also counsel you on how to better live a Christian life.
- Act of Contrition: Say an Act of Contrition, expressing sorrow for your sins and resolving to leave sin behind and live more like Jesus Christ. Say:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with my whole heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.
With your help, I firmly intend to do penance,
to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.

- Absolution: The priest then blessed you in the person of Christ as he says the prayer of Absolution which frees you from your sins.

After Confession:

- Rejoice that through the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation God has reminded you of his unending love!
- Follow through with the penance the priest gave you