

# 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. (Even if you were taught to go face to face when you were younger.)

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 if you wish:

**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 (act of sorrow). Here is one that you can say.

**O my God, I am very sorry and beg pardon for all my sins, because they deserve Thy dreadful punishments, because they have crucified my loving Saviour, Jesus Christ, and most of all because they have offended Thine infinite goodness; and I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace, never to offend Thee again, and carefully to avoid the occasions of 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:

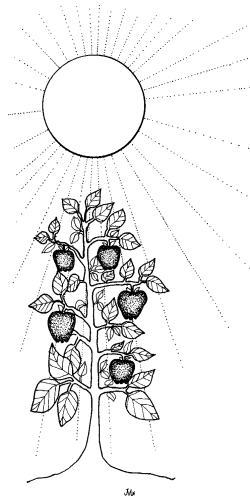
*I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

# After Confession

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

Say a prayer to thank God for forgiving your sins. Make up your mind to try and love God with all your heart and soul and mind and to try and love your neighbour as yourself. Here is a prayer you can say if you wish

**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.**



*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".*

# Confession

a guide  
for young people  
of secondary school age



This leaflet is for young people of secondary school age to help in celebrating the sacrament of penance.

**You may take a copy home to keep if you wish**

# Before Confession

Before you receive the sacrament, spend some time preparing yourself in mind and heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to celebrate the sacrament well. Here is a prayer you can say if you wish:

**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.**

Next make a careful “examination of conscience”. To do that, think carefully about your life and the things for which you need forgiveness. There is some more information on the next page.

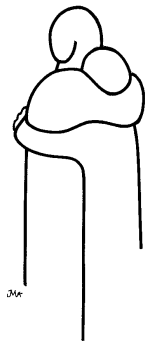
When you have thought of the sins you need to confess, say another prayer to make the best use of the sacrament. Here is one you can say if you wish:

**Dear Jesus, I am sorry for  
my sins and I am  
ashamed of them  
because they have  
hurt you.**

**Help me to make  
a good confession.**

**Help me to know  
how much you love me.**

**Help me to rejoice because you  
forgive me.**



*While he was still a  
long way off, the  
Father ran out to  
meet him ...*

# Examination of conscience

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 and by any sins against others. You can use the following questions if they help you but remember it is *your* confession and you need to think how you personally have sinned and how you personally need God’s help.

## The 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 blasphemed against God?

Have I shown disrespect for 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?

## 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 lost control when I have been angry?

Have I sulked or been sarcastic instead of asking for help?

Have I failed to work properly at school?

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 spoken in an obscene way?

Have I looked at obscene images or videos?

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?

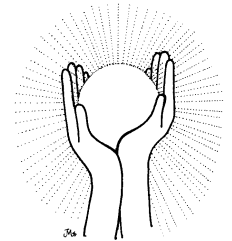
Do I set my heart on possessing things?

Have I encouraged others to do wrong in any 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*