

Examination of Conscience for Children

"He that has My Commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me." John 14:21

To examine means to look into, to seek after and to hunt for. For example, a boy was putting together a puzzle. When he had put all of the pieces together, he found that he was missing one piece. He thought perhaps it had fallen on the floor. He looked under the table. He looked in the garbage can. He examined every inch of the carpet. He looked behind, around, and under the couch. He looked and looked until he finally found that puzzle piece.

In the same way, you must look or examine your conscience. You must hunt for your sins and find hidden faults. But how do you begin? You should always pray to the Holy Spirit and ask His help. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you know your sins. Ask for His light. If you were to drop a quarter on the floor in your bedroom at night, it would take you a long time to find that quarter if you never turned on your bedroom light. But as soon as you switch on your light, you quickly find your quarter. This is what the Holy Spirit will do in our conscience if we ask for His help. He will turn on the light so that sins may be found or remembered. But this is not all we must ask of the Holy Spirit. We must also ask Him to help us be truly sorry for our sins and to help us not commit them ever again. You must pray with all your heart and ask this; and then the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love and Understanding, will most certainly help you. You cannot make a good Confession without the help of the Holy Spirit.

The 10 Commandments are our guide. In the 10 Commandments, God has told us what we are to do and what we are not to do to live healthy and holy lives.

I. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

Do I give time every day to God in prayer?

Do I put my trust in superstitions, good luck charms, rather than God alone?

Have I disobeyed any Church teaching or pretended I was not Catholic?

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

Have I used the words "God" or "Jesus" in anger or irreverently?

Have I used foul or ugly language? Have I wished evil on another?

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

Have I missed Mass on Sunday or any holy day of obligation?

Do I arrive at church late or leave early?

Do I try to be reverent and pay attention during Mass?

Do I avoid unnecessary work on Sunday?

Do I make Sunday a day of prayer or rest?

IV. Honor your father and your mother.

Do I respect and obey my parents?

Have I dishonored or mistreated them by my words or actions?

Am I willing to help around the house or must I be nagged a hundred times?

Do I try to get along with my brothers and sisters?

Am I a tattletale or bully?

Do I give a good example, especially to younger siblings?

Do I respect others in authority: priests, nuns, police, old people, baby-sitters?

V. You shall not kill.

Do I beat up others or hurt their bodies?
Do I say cruel things, or make fun of others to hurt their feelings?
Do I say mean things about others behind their backs?
Have I stopped speaking to anyone?
Do I encourage others to do bad things?
Do I try to love all people, born and unborn, old and young, pretty and ugly?

VI. You shall not commit adultery.

Do I treat my body and other people's bodies with care and respect?
Do I look at television shows, movies, or pictures that are bad?
Am I modest in my speech and the clothes I wear?

VII. You shall not steal.

Have I taken things that were not mine from a store or another person?
Have I destroyed or misused another person's property for fun?
Do I return things that I borrow? In good condition?

VIII. You shall not commit false witness against your neighbor.

Am I honest in my school work?
Do I tell lies or exaggerate to make myself look good?
Do I tell lies to protect myself from punishment?
Do I tell lies or exaggerate to make another person look bad or get them in trouble?

IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

Do I allow my parents to spend time with one another, or do I get jealous and want them to pay attention only to me?
Do I get mad when I have to share my friends?
Are there kids I will not play with or am mean to because they look different or are different?

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

Am I jealous or envious of the things or abilities that others have?
Do I beg my parents for things my friends or other children have?
Am I thankful to God and my parents for what they have given me?
Do I share the things I have with my family, friends and poor people?

The Act of Contrition

Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to sin no more, to amend my life, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.