

## Examination of Conscience for Children

### Prayer before Beginning

O my Saviour Jesus! I come to confess my sins and to beg your forgiveness in the holy sacrament of penance. Help me to remember my sins and to confess them carefully. O Mary, my heavenly Mother, pray for me that I may make a good confession! My dear guardian angel, help me to recall every sin since my last worthy confession.

### Examination of Conscience

- How long has it been since my last good confession?
- Did I hide any sin from the priest?
- Did I do the penance the priest gave me?

### 1st Commandment

- Have I refused to believe anything which the Holy Catholic Church teaches? What was it?
- Have I failed to learn my catechism: the Apostles Creed? The Ten Commandments? The seven sacraments? My prayers?
- Have I failed to study my catechism as I should?

### 2nd Commandment

- Have I taken the holy name of God in vain? How many times?
- Have I spoken disrespectfully of priest? Or holy things? How many times?
- Have I used other bad language? How many times?

### 3rd Commandment

- Have I missed Mass on Sunday through my own fault? How many times?
- Have I misbehaved in church? How many times?
- Have I paid no attention to my prayers?

### 4th Commandment

- Have I been disobedient or disrespectful to my parents or teachers? How many times?
- Have I tried to provoke them? How many times?

### 5th Commandment

- Have I had any fights or quarrels? How many times?
- Have I made fun of anybody or called them names? How many times?
- Have I picked on anyone or tried to provoke them? How many times?

### 6th Commandment

- Have I done anything dirty or impure? How many times?

### 7th Commandment

- Have I stolen anything?
- Have I harmed anyone's property?
- Have I cheated anyone?
- Have I helped others to commit sin in any way?

### 8th Commandment

- Have I lied about anyone? How many times?
- Have I told other lies? To whom? How many times?
- Have I talked behind other people's back? How many times?
- Have I kept bad company? How many times?

### 9th Commandment

- Have I purposely thought of dirty or impure things? How many times?

### 10th Commandment

- Have I desired to have for myself what belongs to another?

### Capital sins

- Have I been guilty of boasting or bragging? How many times? (Pride)
- Have I stuffed myself when eating? How many times? (Gluttony)
- Have I used any drugs? How many times?
- Have I failed to study or do my other work? How many times? (Sloth)
- Are there any other sins I may need to confess?

**Prayer before confession:** O my Jesus, forgive me my sins! They have crucified you again in my heart! Because of them I deserve to lose you forever and to suffer with the demons in the fires of hell. But you have died that I may live and not lose my soul. I wish now to thank thee with all my heart by keeping thy commandments and to please Thee in all that I do. Help me to begin with a good confession. To thee I confess my sins. I resolve, dear Jesus, to give them up. Please pardon me by the hand of thy priest!

**Act of Contrition:** O, my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, 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 thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen. (This prayer should be learned by heart.)

**Prayer of thanksgiving after Confession:** O my God and saviour Jesus Christ, I thank thee with all my heart for pardoning my sins and for washing my sinful soul in thy precious blood from the cross! So many times I have sinned against thee, and so many times you have forgiven me and given me another chance! O grant that I may never wilfully break one of thy commandments again. Grant that I may choose to die rather than lose thy grace and friendship. Thank you, my dear Mother Mary. Help me to be thy very good child. Thank you, my dear guardian angel. Please guide me on the path to paradise. (Do not forget to say or do the penance given you by the priest.)

## ***Examination of Conscience***

Did I pay attention at Mass?  
Have I fooled around in Church?  
Did I say my prayers every day?  
Did I say mean things to my mom or dad?  
Did I always say "Thank You" to people?  
Am I hard to get along with (during school, at Grandma's, at home?)?  
Did I do what my mom and dad told me to do? My teacher?  
Was I lazy around the house?  
Did I do my chores?  
Did I hurt others people's feelings by calling them bad names?  
Have I started fights with my brothers and sisters at home?  
Have I blamed other people for things I do?  
Did I get other people into trouble?  
Do I hit people when I get mad?  
Have I forgiven people? Or am I holding a grudge?  
Have I cheated or been unfair in games?  
Did I refuse to play with someone for no good reason?  
Was I was lazy about my schoolwork?  
Did I fail to do my homework?  
Did I cheat in school?  
How many times did I lie to my parents? My teachers? My friends?  
Did I take anything that didn't belong to me?  
Did I avoid medicine? Did I refuse to eat food I didn't like?

An Examination of Conscience for Children by Fr. Edward Filardi, Gaithersburg, Maryland

***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 rejected any Church teaching or denied that I was a 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 word or deed?

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?

***VI. You shall not commit adultery.***

Do I treat my body and other people's bodies with purity 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 to make myself look good?

Do I tell lies to protect myself from punishment?

Do I tell lies that 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 be mean to because they look different?

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

Am I jealous or envious of the things or abilities that others 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?

## **Holy Family Catholic Church**

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

With some help from the writings of those who knew the hearts and minds of children: Father J. R. Taylor, Father Aloysius J. Heeg, S. G. and Mother Mary Loyola

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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.

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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 good and holy lives.

### **1. The First Commandment: "I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before Me."**

We must believe in God, our Father. We must love Him, hope in Him, and pray to Him with loving hearts. Under the First Commandment, we must pay special attention to praying or talking with God in prayer everyday. When you wake up, bless yourself and thank God for the day. Ask Him to help you in all you think, do, and say. Remember to pray before eating and thanking God for your food and all your blessings. How our good Jesus loves a thankful heart! Kneel down next to your bed each night and pray to God before sleeping. All these are called our daily prayers. To not talk or pray to God and decide not to make Him a part of your day is a sin against the First Commandment. We are not putting God first. We must always try to put God first in our lives. When you are praying, you should always try to keep your heart with God. Offer God the pure love for Him in your heart. There might be times when your mind wanders off and you think of other things but as soon as you remember, bring your thoughts back to Jesus.

To become distracted or forgetful is not a sin. Just keep trying to keep your mind and heart with Jesus. Speak to Him as you would speak sweetly to your very best friend. Jesus loves to hear from you! Jesus knows you better than you know yourself. Did you ever think about that? He loves you so much. Always try to keep your mind and heart with Him as you pray. Ask your Guardian Angel to help you pray.

Not paying attention in Religion class or not doing your Religion lessons can also be a sin against the First Commandment if you are not trying to learn about what Jesus would like to teach you through your parents, teachers, or priests. Always try to do your very best for Jesus who gave His very best for you because He loves you so much!

I say my prayers every morning and night.

I praise and adore God. This is how I keep God's First Commandment.

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## **2. The Second Commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."**

I speak of God and of the Saints and of holy things with respect and reverence. This is how I keep God's Second Commandment.

We are told in the Second Commandment to speak with respect when we talk about God, anything that has to do with God, or about things that are holy. Never use lightly the holy Name of Jesus. There are other words, that when we speak of them, we must say with respect such as Mother Mary, the Cross, the Saints, the Blessed Sacrament, His Precious Blood...

Sometimes God's holy Name is spoken lightly, "Oh my God, how did that happen?" If a person is in a habit of using God's name in this way, they need to break this habit. We must always say God's Name with love and respect.

A more serious sin against the Second Commandment is if one says the name of God in moment of anger. This is called cursing. If we are in a store or a place where we hear someone curse God's holy Name, we can immediately pray for that person and tell Jesus we are sorry that His Name was said without love. We can whisper His Name with love. This is called "reparation."

Under the Second Commandment, then, we must always speak of God or His holy things with love and respect.

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## **3. The Third Commandment: "Remember to keep Holy the Lord's Day."**

I go to Church on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation. I join the Priest as he offers Mass. This is how I keep God's Third Commandment.

Our Sabbath day is Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead. Each Sunday is like a little Easter. Sunday is a day of rest. Sunday is a holy day. Sunday is the Lord's day. We go to Mass each Sunday. We may also go to the Anticipated Sunday Mass on Saturday evening. We also go to Mass on all special Holy Days that the Church asks of us to love and honor God. To miss Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day on purpose is a sin. It may happen that you are sick or are unable to go to Mass on Sunday. This is not a sin. You would be there to pray and receive Jesus in Holy Communion if you were able, but you are sick or unable to get to Church. Jesus knows this.

And how do you behave in Church? You must remember to behave with love, reverence, and respect. Have you ever noticed an older child laughing and giggling, chattering, constantly turning around to look behind, putting their feet up on the pew, chewing gum, or even eating? Do you think Jesus is please with such sad behavior? It would be very wrong to act this way in Church. When we come to Mass we must concentrate on loving God with all our heart. We must be a good example to others around us. Younger brothers and sisters and other children need to see your good example.

By our good actions, we can show Jesus how much we love Him.

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#### **4. The Fourth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother."**

I love and respect and obey my father and mother. I pay attention to my teacher in school. This is how I keep God's Fourth Commandment.

God has given us parents to take care of us and if we do not love, honor, and obey them, then we do not love, honor, and obey God. It is not enough to say that you love your mom and dad, for if you really did you would try to live that love by your actions. You would obey them the first time they ask you something and even with a smile! A child that pouts and refuses to obey their mom or dad and sasses back is sinning against the Fourth Commandment. Under the Fourth Commandment, you must also honor and obey your teachers and priests. You must respect and obey them as you would your parents.

You must also give respect to the elderly. Their age makes them worthy of your care and consideration. If you see an old man or woman, no matter how humble or different looking they seem, always be kind, gentle, and polite to them. Never laugh or be rude towards them.

In examining your conscience on the Fourth Commandment, you will ask yourself if you have been disobedient or disrespectful in talk or actions to your parents, teachers, or priests and if you have ever been unkind to the elderly.

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#### **5. The Fifth Commandment: "You shall not kill."**

I take care of my body and soul. I never fight or quarrel or hurt anyone. I am kind to everybody. This is how I keep God's Fifth Commandment.

To kill someone would indeed be a terrible crime and a serious sin against the Fifth Commandment! Most children would never sin in this way. But there are other ways that we can offend or hurt by not living this commandment in our lives.

We must not physically hurt anyone by hitting, pinching, biting, etc.

We must not say cruel things to others by making fun of them.

We must not hold in our hearts hatred towards another person. To wish terrible things to happen to a person or wish they were dead would be a sin against the Fifth Commandment. If we are angry and hurt we must say "I Forgive them." Look at our dear Jesus hanging on the cross on the crucifix. How good and pure He is and yet, see how He is hurt by hatred

and anger. All our sins hurt Jesus. We must pray, go to Confession and Holy Communion, and He will give us the strength to love and forgive all who hurt us.

Another way we sin against the Fifth Commandment is by trying to make another person sin. If you ask your sister to get some money out of your mother's purse for you without asking or if you ask a friend to lie for you, then you are guilty of trying to harm another person by leading them into sin. If you go to the store with your friend and see an bin of chocolate candy and say to your friend, "Nobody is looking. Quickly, put some in your pockets. They will never notice a few chocolates gone. They have so many." If your friend steals them then, not only have you sinned by stealing, but you have also broken the Fifth Commandment because you have caused harm to your friend's soul by helping him to sin.

Under the Fifth Commandment, we must also be kind to our pets and small animals. We must not harm them or make them suffer for our fun.

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## **6. The Sixth Commandment: "You Shall Not Commit Adultery."**

I am modest in all I do, in all I say, in all I listen to, and in all I look at. The Sixth Commandment says we must be pure. We must be modest in our dress, in our words, and in our actions. God wants all children to have a clean heart. When our Mother Mary appeared to the 3 little children at Fatima in 1917, she told them that there are fashions (the way people dress) that are coming that will very much offend or hurt our Jesus. We must be modest children. If a modest child sees a billboard or a magazine cover that is not modest, he looks the other way. A modest child does not look up bad pictures or games on the computer. A modest child does not listen to music that has impure or bad words.

Our world today is very immodest and impure and we need God's help and our Mother Mary's prayers to stay pure and holy. Every morning when you wake up, say an "Hail Mary" and ask Mother Mary to guard your purity. Say no impure words and try to think no impure thoughts. Pray to your Guardian Angel each night before going to sleep to protect you and guide you.

The Bible tells us: "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God."

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## **7. The Seventh Commandment: "You Shall Not Steal."**

I never take or damage what belongs to others. I am always honest and generous. This is how I keep God's Seventh Commandment. This commandment tells us we must not take or keep what belongs to another. A child must not take anything, in secret, that belongs to their parents or to a brother or sister without asking. They may think that because it belongs to a family member, it belongs to them. Without permission, it is wrong to take things and would be a sin against the Seventh Commandment.

You must not take pencils, toys, candy, small or big items from your friends, neighbors, stores without asking or paying for it.

If you borrow a toy, book, or any item from someone you must return it. If you damage or break it, you must try to fix it or replace it.

You must not look at another person's work and copy it as your own work. This would include tests, homework, reports, etc. This is cheating or stealing another's work.

If you, on purpose, break a neighbor's window, damage their lawn, flowerbeds or trees, then you have broken the Seventh Commandment.

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### **8. The Eighth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."**

I never tell lies about anyone. I never speak of anyone's faults. I always say the truth. This is how I keep God's Eighth Commandment. This commandment tells us we must not lie. The serpent in paradise, in the Garden of Eden, was the first to tell a lie. It said to Eve, "If you eat of the forbidden fruit, you will not die." The serpent knew what it said was a lie. Those who lie follow the devil and God is not pleased. When thinking of the Eighth Commandment, ask yourself if you have always been truthful. Anything that is not true is a lie.

Always remember that a lie is a lie. Do not call an untruth a trifle, and exaggeration, or a little white lie. Always be honest in the small things so when you grow up you will be honest in the big things. Even if you are afraid of getting into trouble, you must not lie.

You all probably know the story told of President George Washington. When George was a young boy, he must have had cherry trees by his house. One day, perhaps when he had found an ax in the tool shed, he cut a cherry tree down. His father came home and when he saw the cherry tree cut down, he was very upset. He asked, "Who cut down that cherry tree?" All who heard him could tell he was very upset about it. George could have lied and said he didn't do it. He also could have said nothing and that would have been a sin of omission. Instead, George said, "Father, I cannot tell a lie. I am the one who cut down that cherry tree." We are told that Mr. Washington was so impressed with his son's honesty that he forgot about being upset. He was very pleased that, even if it seemed that George would be punished, he chose to tell the truth and accept the consequences.

Children, we must always remember the story of George Washington and tell the truth, even if it seems like we may be punished for something we did or did not do.

To repeat something hurtful against another is also a sin against the Eighth Commandment... Let's say that one day at school your teacher handed back the class Math tests and you noticed that the girl next to you, Emily, received an "F" on her test. Emily quickly put her test in her folder before anyone could see it but you did see it. If, at recess, you told all the children in your class that Emily received an "F" on her test, this would be wrong. What you say may be true but you must also stop and think, "Is it necessary that I tell others what I know? Will it hurt that person?" To know it is wrong to tell and to tell it anyway would be a sin against the Eighth Commandment.

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### **9. The Ninth Commandment: "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."**

I am pure in what I think and desire. I keep my mind and my heart pure. This is how I keep God's Ninth Commandment.

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**10. The Tenth Commandment: "You Shall Not Covet Your Neighbor's Goods."**

I never desire to take what belongs to others. I am never jealous. I am always satisfied. This is how I keep God's Tenth Commandment.

This Commandment tells us we must always be satisfied with what we have. If we have a friend that has a toy or a thing that we want, we must not be envious. We must not constantly beg our parents for what other children have and what we want. This would be a sin against the Tenth Commandment. Try to always remember to thank Jesus for all the blessings you have.

A child with a thankful heart will never break the Tenth Commandment.