

An Examination of Conscience in Light of the Ten Commandments

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The First Commandment

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

- Have I received Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?
- Have I neglected to confess a mortal sin in a previous confession to a priest, when I was aware of having committed one?
- Have I practiced superstition?
- Have I been engaged in occult practices such as consulting horoscopes, tarot cards, or ouija boards?
- Have I participated in seances, or in satanic or demonic services and/or prayers?
- Have I refused to accept any teaching of the Church?
- Have I put my soul in danger by reading, viewing, or listening to material that attacks the teachings of the Catholic Church in matters of faith or morals?
- Do I belong to any anti-Catholic organizations such as the Freemasons (Shriners)?
- Have I attended the meetings or gatherings of any anti-Catholic organizations?
- Have I profaned (desecrated) or spoken sinfully against a sacred person, place, or thing?

- Have I been slow or reluctant to perform my duties toward God?
- Have I neglected to pray?
- Have I neglected to prepare myself properly for Holy Communion?
- Have I made a false god of pleasure, sports, internet, video games, or television, etc?

The Second Commandment

***You shall not take the Name of the Lord
your God in vain.***

- Have I taken the Holy Name of God in vain?
- Have I spoken His Name in anger?
- Have I jokingly or irreverently spoken about God?
- Have I been a baptismal or confirmation sponsor in a non-Catholic ceremony?
- Have I broken any promises (oaths) in which I invoked God's Name?

The Third Commandment

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

- Have I failed to attend Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation without just cause (for example, serious illness or impassible roads or pathways)?

- Have I arrived at Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation after the Liturgy of the Word without just cause?
- Have I worn improper attire to Mass, or have I otherwise distracted others from paying attention at Mass?
- Do I fast (one full meal and two lighter meals) and abstain from eating meat on the days or at times which are appointed by the Church (for example, fast and abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and abstain from eating meat on all Fridays during Lent).
- Have I maintained the one-hour fast (including gum) before receiving Holy Communion (except for health reasons). Water is permissible.
- Have I fulfilled the Church's precept to confess my sins at least once a year? (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2042)
- Have I fulfilled my yearly Easter duty of receiving Holy Communion and Confession?
- Have I performed (or required others to perform) servile or manual labor on Sundays (not including work to save souls or work required by your employer, enjoyable gardening, or acts of mercy such as helping a neighbor in need or milking cows and feeding livestock)?

- Have I deliberately failed to pay attention at Mass?
- Am I generous in helping the Church and contributing to the financial support of her ministries that are laboring to save souls? Do I try to follow the biblical exhortation to tithe, that is, to give back to God, through His Church and her ministries, one tenth of the income He blesses me with (cf. Malachi 3:6-12)?

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

For Parents:

- Have I set a bad example for my children?
- When I do correct my children's faults, is it done with charity?
- Have I made sure that my children make their First Confession and First Communion at about the age of seven?
- Have I failed to take my children to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation; or neglected to provide them with an orthodox Catholic education; or neglected to teach them how to pray; or failed to lead them to the sacraments?

- Have I failed to supervise my children with respect to the friends they choose and the entertainment they pursue?
- Do I monitor my children in their choice of reading material, in the shows they watch on television, or in the movies or concerts they attend?
- Have I separated from or divorced my spouse civilly without consultation of a priest who follows the mind of the Church?
- Do I seek God's help every day to fulfill my duties as a parent?

For Children:

- Have I disobeyed my parents, or been disrespectful to them in other ways?
- Do I nurse angry feelings or show resentment when I am corrected by my parents?
- Have I been moody, sour, or bad-tempered towards other people?
- Do I desire to leave my parents' household when I am too young or for other improper reasons?
- Am I a financial burden to my parents when I can take care of my own financial needs and am old enough to help support the household?
- Do I fight and/or quarrel with my brothers and sisters?

- Have I failed to express my love for my parents?
- Have I failed to help my parents when they were unable to meet their basic needs?
- Do I faithfully perform—without complaining—the household and outdoor chores my parents give me to do?

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not kill.

- Have I lost my temper or become unjustly angry at others?
- Have I murdered or otherwise unjustly injured (no matter how slight) anyone?
- Have I been a reckless driver?
- Have I tempted others to sin by my bad example or sinful conversation?
- Have I encouraged others to read or watch sinful materials or programs or to otherwise do sinful things?
- Have I failed to make up for, or repair for, the bad example I may have given others?
- Have I been jealous of others? Have I been envious of the possessions of others?
- How many people have I led into sin? What type of sins were they?

- Have I tried to, or nurtured the thoughts to, commit suicide?
- Have I failed to take proper care of my health?
- Have I mutilated myself or someone else?
- Have I been drunk or intoxicated on alcohol or other substances?
- Have I intentionally overindulged in food or drink (gluttony)?
- Have I participated in gang fights or other illegal gang activities?
- Have I been a bully or picked fights with others?
- Have I consented to a sterilization or encouraged others to do so, or actively taken part in someone else's sterilization?
- Have I practiced contraception or encouraged others to do so?
- When using Natural Family Planning, have I prayed with my spouse and truly sought God's will?
- Have I recommended, consented to, advised, or actively taken part in an abortion?
- Am I aware of the Church's teaching that abortion is a mortal sin, and that those who actively take part (for example, doctor, nurse, and mother) in an abortion are automatically

excommunicated? (However, most priests have the authority to lift that excommunication.)

- Have I harmed anyone's reputation by my speech or actions?
- Have I desired to take revenge of anyone who offended me?
- Have I hated or nursed bad feelings toward any person?
- Have I maliciously teased or insulted others?
- Have I refused to forgive anyone who may have offended me?
- Have I sought pardon of those whom I have offended?

The Sixth and Ninth Commandments

6. You shall not commit adultery.

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

- Have I entertained impure thoughts? Have I deliberately recalled impure thoughts or images? Do I watch soap operas or other impure programs?
- Have I had sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex when we weren't married to each other (fornication)?
- Have I had sexual relations with a married person who is not my spouse (adultery)?

- Although I may never have fully carried them out, have I consented to impure desires?
- Were any circumstances present to make the sin of impurity even more serious, for example, having impure relations with someone who is consecrated to God by vows (sacrilege), or who is married to someone other than myself (adultery), or who is a member of my family (other than my spouse if I am married) (incest)?
- Have I engaged in impure conversations? Did I begin them?
- Have I sought to have a good time by engaging in entertainment which placed me in proximate [close] occasions of sin, such as sensual dances; sexually suggestive movies, plays, and reading material; evil company; houses of prostitution; and massage parlors?
- Am I aware of the fact that I might already be sinning by simply placing myself in a proximate occasion of sin? Such circumstances can include sharing of a room with a member of the opposite sex, being alone with a member of the opposite sex with whom I have continually sinned with, or deliberately taking such a person to a secluded place.
- Have I neglected to dress modestly or to otherwise safeguard purity?

- Have I willfully looked at immodest pictures?
- Have I immodestly looked or glanced at others?
- Did I do any of the above things, knowing that they involved gravely sinful matter?
- Have I led others to commit the sins of immodesty or impurity? Specifically speaking, what were they?
- Have I committed impure acts by myself (masturbation)? Did I do so deliberately and freely, knowing that serious matter was involved? Did I know that masturbation freely and willfully performed is a mortal sin?
- Have I committed impure acts with someone else either of the opposite or the same sex (homosexual acts)? How many times did I do so? Were there any circumstances (such as impure acts with members of my family other than my spouse, or with persons consecrated to God by vows or promises) which could have made the sin especially serious?
- Do I have evil or immoral friendships? Have I taken steps to break these friendships?
- Have I been engaged in immodest conduct or conversation with someone I am seriously thinking of marrying?

- Have I used my fiancée, spouse, or another person as an object for my pleasure, rather than a person created in God's image and likeness whom God has placed in my life to respect and reverence and help get to heaven?
- Have I engaged in acts of intimate affection reserved for spouses (such as passionate kissing, embraces, petting, etc.) with someone other than my spouse, arousing lustful thoughts and desires as well?
- Have I failed to protect my spouse, fiancée, or friend from sinning?
- Have I failed to investigate beforehand the sinful potentials of watching a particular show or reading a particular book or magazine?

For Married People:

- Have I denied my spouse of her or his marital right?
- Have I engaged in adulterous acts or desires?
- Have I used or consented to the use of artificial contraceptives?
- Have I suggested that others do so? (On sterilization, abortion, etc., refer to the Fifth Commandment.)

- Do I practice natural means of conception control without justifiable reasons before God for doing so? (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2368-2371, and *Humane Vitae*, 16.)



The Seventh and Tenth Commandments

7. *You shall not steal.*

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

- Have I stolen anything? What was it worth?
- Have I returned the stolen item, or do I intend to return it?
- Have I damaged or been responsible for the damage of another person's property? What would be the cost of repairing or replacing it?
- Have I caused harm to anyone in business dealings by means of fraud, deception, or coercion?

- Have I spent beyond my means?
- Have I deprived others of their needs by spending too little?
- Have I supported the Church and charitable organizations according to my means?
- Have I honored my debts?
- Have I taken stolen property or refused to seek the owner of property that I have found?
- Have I seriously entertained temptations to steal?
- Have I been lazy with respect to my employment, household chores, work, or studies?
- Have I been greedy?
- Have I placed too high a value on material goods?
- Have I failed to help those whom I know are truly needy?
- Have I been irresponsible with money or other means of wealth which God has entrusted to me?
- Have I been envious of the wealth or material goods of another person?

The Eighth Commandment
You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbor.

- Have I lied?
- Have I sought to make up for the damage caused by my lies?
- Have I accused others of wrongdoing without sufficient evidence?
- Have I been guilty of detraction (to speak about the faults of others without having a good reason for doing so)?
- Have I been guilty of calumny (to falsely accuse someone of sinful conduct)?
- Have I gossiped about another person?
- Have I too hastily judged someone of improper conduct?
- Have I, without sufficient cause, suspected someone to be guilty of misconduct?
- Have I been excessively critical, negative, or uncharitable in my speech?
- Have I failed to honor the confidences or secrets entrusted to me by another? Have I revealed them to someone else without permission or without due or serious cause?

- Have I used the technique of binding others to secrecy about something that should be revealed to lawful authority?
- Have I failed to defend the good name or honor of others?

Five Steps to Confession

1. Examine your conscience.
2. Be sorry for your sins; try to have perfect sorrow. Try to make an act of contrition before going to Confession.
3. Make a firm resolution not to sin again and to avoid the occasions of sin.
4. Tell your sins to a priest and receive absolution (all mortal sins must be confessed).
5. Perform your penance promptly.

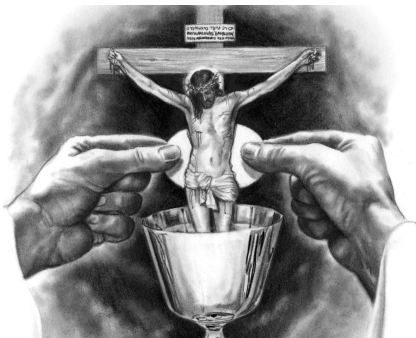
You can begin your confession by saying “Bless me Father for I have sinned, my last confession was _____ (weeks/months/years) ago.” Then tell your sins. Say an “Act of Contrition” when asked by the priest, before the absolution.



We need to rid ourselves of our desires for possessions, power, and pleasure.

Act of Contrition

O my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all of my sins, because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they have offended 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.



Guidelines for the Reception of Communion

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As Catholics we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental Confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity

for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (Code of Canon Law, Canon 916). A frequent reception of the sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

Sacrilegious Communion

St. Paul in First Corinthians expressly warns against the sin of sacrilegious communion when he says: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself” (1 Cor 11:27-29).

Today, when most Catholics do not go to confession from one end of the year to the next, and when in a sizeable parish it is not unusual for there to be under ten Confessions per week, and yet when it comes time for Communion at Sunday Mass, virtually everyone in attendance receives Communion, it can be presumed that many people—human nature being what it is—

are receiving Holy Communion unworthily, i.e., while in the state of mortal sin.

Prior to approximately 1960, it was the norm for practicing Catholics to go to the sacrament of Confession once a week, or at least once every two or three weeks (whether or not they had a mortal sin to confess), and afterwards to receive Communion on Sunday. The number of confessions approximately equalled the number of Communions. About half of a parish would receive Communion on a given Sunday.

Presently, however, there are hardly any Confessions, and the reception of Communion is almost universal. Granted, many of those weekly Confession in previous years were probably Confessions of venial sins (not mortal sins), and thus they were not strictly necessary before Communion, yet we must admit that mortal sin has become far more commonplace today, and so it would only be a person wearing rose-colored glasses, one who wants to redefine the whole concept of sin, who would say that mortal sin has become so rare that only a handful of parishioners each week have need of Confession before receiving Holy Communion.

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Be Not Afraid Family Hours are one-hour programs that help form consciences, encourage frequent confessions, foster deep reverence and appreciation for the Holy Eucharist, assure bishops and pastors of theologically-sound teachings, and help promote stewardship in the parish.

Format: Every Family Hour includes a teaching faculty member discussing a particular aspect of the Catholic faith, Roman Curia Cardinal Francis Arinze teaching the catechism, inspiring music from contemporary Catholic artists, a beautiful meditative Rosary with vibrant pictures for each Hail Mary and at least one Mystery acted out in movie format, and insights from Blessed John Paul II and Blessed Teresa.

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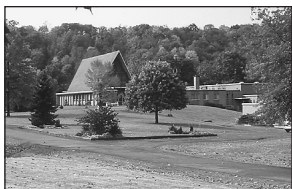


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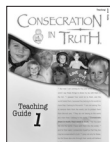
Textbook

The Apostolate's Family Catechism is a Vatican-approved textbook. Each year, students, teachers, and parents delve deeper into the Faith! The Family Catechism includes sections from Sacred Scripture and Vatican II documents and is cross-referenced with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *Splendor of Truth*, papal documents and other theological books.



Teaching Guides

Teaching Guides for Levels 1–8 contain comprehensive lesson plans, optional activities, examination of conscience, answer keys and more. The lessons engage students in thought provoking discussions that lead them to a deeper understanding of the Faith! The Teacher Prep CDs help busy teachers confidently prepare for each lesson.

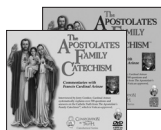


Student Workbooks

The Student Workbook for each level complements the Teaching Guides. Students complete questions or activities, memorize key teachings of the Faith or Scripture from the By Heart Catechism & Scripture Review, and practice a resolution throughout the week. Levels 1–4 also provide beautiful theological illustrations to color.

Apostolate's Family Catechism Commentaries *on DVD and CD*

Roman Curia Cardinal Francis Arinze, Sr. John Vianney, Bishop Ramon Arguelles and Bishop Socrates Villegas (in Tagalog), and Fr. Pablo Straub (in Spanish) present the Faith with simple, down-to-earth explanations and stories as they review the questions and answers from *The Apostolate's Family Catechism*



Family Catechism Commentaries
DVD and CD

book. The DVDs are normally shown in the school or parish at the beginning of each lesson, and the parents are encouraged to use the corresponding CD in the home or car to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom and to spark family discussions on the Faith.

By Heart Catechism and Scripture Review

The *By Heart Catechism and Scripture Review*, is a condensed version of the questions and answers in *The Apostolate's Family Catechism*. This review book sums up the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church in simple, easy-to-memorize language. In fewer than 200 questions and answers, students in levels 1-6 master the basics of the Catholic Faith. Levels 7 and 8 focus on short Scripture passages, giving students the Biblical basis for the key teachings of the Catholic Church.

Heroes of Our Faith™

Heroes of Our Faith is a unique series of stories which depict saintly individuals or Bible heroes speaking in the first person. These partially fictional stories illustrate truths contained in the catechism by relating the life experiences of saintly individuals in their particular quest for holiness, encouraging and enlightening us in our own earthly pilgrimage so that we might someday join the Communion of Saints in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Heroes of Our Faith: Francisco of Fatima* book is currently available.

The Administrator and Teacher Handbook

The *Administrator and Teacher Handbook* includes an overview of the catechetical program and guidelines for parents, faculty, and students. It covers topics such as parental participation, sacramental preparation, adult formation, faculty workshops, teacher evaluations, respect and reverence, liturgical life, discipline, and student evaluations.

Also included are methods used in the classroom and suggestions on motivation, memorization, understanding, respect, reverence, discipline, prayer, and organization. Also included are essential components of the lesson plans, such as the Ten Steps to Mental Prayer, examinations of conscience for various levels, and basic prayers.

The *Parent Handbook* includes an overview of the discipline, prayer, materials and program methods which are described in the *Administrator and Teacher Handbook*.

Unites the Family with the Parish and School!

Found to be in Conformity with the
Catechism of the Catholic Church by the Ad Hoc
Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism,
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