

Examination of Conscience

A quiet preparation for confession. These original questions are prompts, not a scorecard or a declaration that every difficulty is a mortal sin.

Begin with prayer

Holy Spirit, help me see my choices truthfully. Give me sorrow for my sins, confidence in God's mercy, and courage to change. Amen.

God and prayer

Have I deliberately put something before God? Have I neglected prayer or treated faith as unimportant? Have I relied on superstition as if it controlled God?

God's name

Have I used holy names contemptuously, lied under oath, or treated a sacred promise carelessly?

Sunday and worship

Have I missed obligatory Mass through my own fault? Consider real obstacles such as illness or necessary care of others rather than assuming every absence was culpable.

Family and responsibility

Have I neglected people entrusted to me? Have I been cruel, controlling or dishonest at home? Respect for family does not require submitting to abuse.

Life and dignity

Have I harmed, threatened or humiliated someone? Have I encouraged violence or treated another life as disposable?

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Continue prayerfully. Be honest about choices without inventing faults.

Chastity and fidelity

Have I been unfaithful in my choices? Have I used pornography or treated another person as an object? Distinguish an unwanted thought from deliberately entertaining it.

Property and justice

Have I stolen, cheated, exploited someone, withheld fair payment or refused reasonable restitution?

Truth and reputation

Have I lied, spread an unverified accusation, exposed private information without good reason, or damaged someone's reputation?

Envy and generosity

Have I resented another person's good or allowed greed to govern my decisions? Have I ignored a need I could reasonably help?

Good left undone

Where have I withheld kindness, neglected a duty, refused necessary help or failed to seek reconciliation when it was possible and safe?

Finish with hope

Grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent are relevant to mortal sin. Unwanted thoughts and temptation are not automatically sins. Explain uncertainty to your confessor. If you experience scrupulosity, follow your regular confessor's guidance rather than extending the examination.

Choose what you need to confess and one practical change. Keep any notes private. This guide does not ask you to submit your sins.

Step-by-step confession guide | USCCB: Examinations of Conscience

See also Catechism 1854-1864 and Code of Canon Law 987-989. Original prompts prepared by Catholic Repository, 12 September 2026. A lay educational resource.