

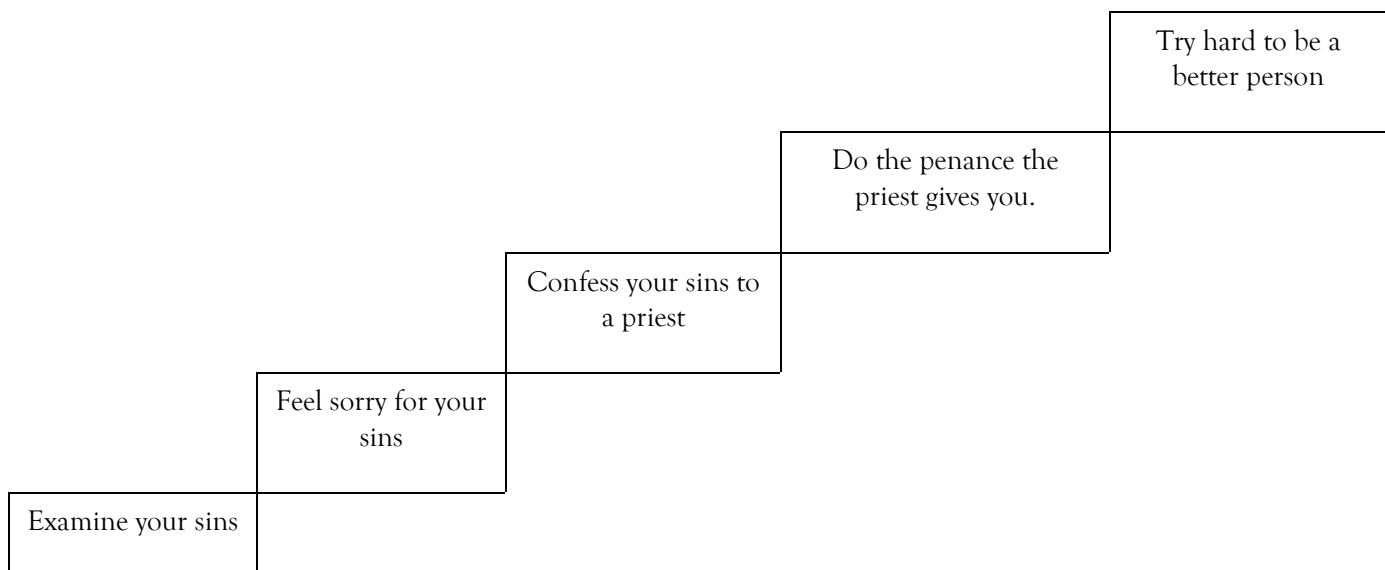


RECONCILIATION IS THE SACRAMENT OF GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE

God loves us always. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus teaches that God wants to forgive both sinners and self-righteous people. The focus of this story is the longsuffering father, who continues to love both sons as they dishonor him. The father, seeing his son in the distance, runs out to meet him with an embrace and a kiss. Through one loving gesture, the father forgives the son. The son need not beg for forgiveness, he has been forgiven.

It is a beautiful story of God's love and determination to see the lost return to him. When we sin we move away from God, but he always wants us to come back; God will always forgive us when we are truly sorry and God wants us to be willing to forgive others who hurt us, as well. **God's forgiveness, like God's love, doesn't stop.**

5 STEPS TO A GOOD CONFESSION



HOW TO CONFESS YOUR SINS

1. Enter the confessional and sit down across from the priest (if going face-to-face) or kneel down in front of the screen (if going anonymous)
2. Make the Sign of The Cross (***“in the name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit”***) and say **“Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been _____ since my last confession. These are my sins.”**
3. Confess (tell) your sins to the priest.
4. Listen to the priest ... *he will give you some advice on how you can be a better Catholic and open your heart to God and be the person He wants you to be.*
5. The priest will give you a penance -- *it may be a prayer or some kind of action that will help you to be more thoughtful about areas of sinfulness or failing.*
6. The priest will invite you to tell God you are sorry for your sins by saying the Act of Contrition (**“My God I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.”**)
7. The priest will give you absolution and offer you Gods forgiveness (“ I absolve you of your sins in the name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.”) as you bless yourself with the Sign of The Cross (“in the name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. **Amen.**”). Say **“Thank You”** to the priest.
8. Leave the confessional, if necessary go to the Altar and say your penance... feeling uplifted and energized by God’s mercy and love!

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Do I love God as His very own child?

Do I remember to pray to Him every day?

Do I thank Him for all He does for me?

Do I always say God's name with love?

Do I always say the name of Jesus with love?

Do I show my love for God by loving others?

Do I keep Sunday holy by going to Mass?

Do I remind myself that I am in God's house and behave, as I should?

Do I always talk nicely to my parents?

Do I do what my parents ask me to do?

Do I help with the chores around the house?

Do I try to be pleasant while doing chores and obeying my parents?

Do I show my love for others by obeying rules at school and at public places?

Do I treat others with love and kindness?

Do I ever hurt others by calling them names?

Do I fight with others?

Do I make others angry?

Do I always tell the truth?

Do I make promises that I do not keep?

Do I ever cheat on tests or schoolwork?

Do I ever take things that do not belong to me?

Do I refuse to share my things with others?

Do I treat the property of others with respect and care?

Did I misbehave, play or talk in church?

Did I treat holy things without respect?

Did I disobey my parents, teachers or those in authority?

Do I willingly help around the house when asked to do so?

Do I give a good example to my brothers and sisters?

Do I get along with my brothers and sisters?

Am I a bully or tattletale?

Did I fight with or hurt anyone with my words or deeds?

Did I get angry and stop speaking to anyone?

Did I call anyone names or talk about them behind their back?

Was I too lazy to take care of myself? (*Brush your teeth well, eat well?*)

Did I eat or drink too much?

Was I mean to animals?

Did I tell the truth when asked?

Did I tell any lies?

Did I cheat on games, tests, work or projects?

Did I take something that wasn't mine?

Did I break something on purpose?

Did I borrow something without permission?

Do I return what I borrow from others in good condition?

Do I get mad when I have to share a sibling or friend with others?

Am I mean to others who are different from myself?

Do I exclude others from play or activities because they are different?

Am I envious or jealous of what other people have?

Am I envious or jealous of what other people can do?

Am I thankful to God and my parents for what I have been given?

Do I share my things with my brothers and sisters?

Do I share my things with those around me?