

The First Commandment

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

- Has God been first in my life, or have I sought God only when it is convenient?
- Have I taken God for granted, has my love for God been lukewarm or presumptuous?
- Have I made prayer an important part of my daily life?

- Have I sought God with all my mind; do I seek an adult understanding of my faith?
- Do I seek the Lord in the Scriptures?
- Have I engaged in superstitious practices, or forms of divination and magic, for example: tarot cards, ouija boards , magic, crystals etc.

- Can I admit that I need God's help?
- Do I believe that God wants to forgive me of all my sins?
- Is there anything in me that prevents me from surrendering to God?

The Second Commandment

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

- Have I misused the name of “God” ?
- Have I blasphemed by using the name of the Lord Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or the saints as a curse word?
- Have I sworn a false oath, by calling on God to be witness to a lie?

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

- Do I seek to make the Lord’s day holy by attending Sunday Mass?
- Have I missed Sunday Mass out of my own laziness or fault?
- In my prayer and attendance at the liturgy, am I content with a passive observance rather than devoting myself to genuine worship of the Lord?
- Have I sought to set Sunday apart, or is it just another day of the week?

The Fourth Commandment

Honour your Father and your Mother

- Have I always acted to support my parents? Do I care for them as they age?
- Do I honour my parents, do I express gratitude to them for their sacrifices?
- Do I have any resentment or unforgiveness towards my parents to which I hold on?

- Do I support the family as the basic unit of social life? Do I support public policy which protects and upholds family life?
- Do I love and care for the other members of my family, my brothers and sisters and their families?
- Is there any need for forgiveness and reconciliation which has been ignored?

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not kill

- Have I ever preserved hatred in my heart towards someone?
- Have I ever been violent, or struck out at someone in anger?
- Have I ever procured or helped to procure an abortion?

- Am I pro-life? Do I speak out for the dignity of human life, the elderly and sick, the unborn, or am I silent?
- Do I take reasonable care of my own health? Have I abused alcohol, or polluted my body with other drugs?
- Have I acted in a way that has given scandal to those around me?

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery

- Do I respect my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- Do I recognize my sexuality as a gift from God, and, therefore, sacred?
- Have I sought to integrate my sexuality and to foster the virtue of chastity?

- Have I abused the gift of my sexuality, by myself, or with another person outside of the sacred bond of marriage?
- Have I looked at, or read, pornography?
- Have I lusted after someone in my heart or thoughts, or treated them as an object?

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal

- Have I ever stolen something that belongs to another?
- Have I respected the goods of another person?
- Have I always respected God’s creation, by caring for the environment?

- Have I sought to be just and fair in all my dealings?
- Have I ever stolen from an employer by not doing a proper day’s work?
- Have I cared for the poor who are in my midst by sharing what God has given me?

Examination of Conscience

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

- Do I seek to give witness to the truth at all times?
- Does the way I live my life bear witness to the truth of the Gospel?
- Am I consistent, or do I change my stance depending on which group I am in?

- Have I lied? Have I been boastful or proud?
- Have I destroyed someone's reputation by gossip, slander, or detraction?
- Am I trustworthy, or have I failed to keep my word, or a confidence?

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.

- Have I been envious of someone?
- Have I limited another's freedom by manipulation, or coercion?
- Have I sought to be pure of heart, to practice modesty and patience?

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

- Does my self image rest in the things I possess? Do I value others according to what they have?
- Am I using my possessions in order to give greater glory to God and to work out my salvation?
- Have I always respected other people's rights to their own property?

A sacramental confession is one of the best ways to approach God for his forgiveness so that we can be reconciled to him and receive his love more fully into our hearts. A good preparation for the sacrament centers on reviewing our consciences to see patterns of sin, not just the individual acts, that separate us from God. As we identify these sin patterns, we can seek healing and change, especially in the areas of our lives which most distance ourselves from God.

The following questions, which can help our preparation for confession, are based on the Ten Commandments. They are intended to help us open our minds to the ways we have sinned against God and against those around us. They should not be seen as a checklist, but as an invitation to search our hearts in some very important areas so that we might receive the healing and love of our heavenly Father.