

Examination of Conscience for High School Youth

This examination of conscience is designed as a group reflection to help teens prepare themselves for individual confession and absolution. It can be used in a communal celebration of the sacrament (Rite 2), as preparation for individual reconciliation (Rite 1), or during a penitential prayer service. It is particularly suited to a retreat setting or day of reflection. The examination of conscience may be read aloud by a retreat director, a priest or another reader while participants silently reflect.

Although designed for use in a communal setting, a copy can be provided to individuals for remote preparation for the sacrament, for individual confession apart from a group, or for private prayer.

Many examinations of conscience are based on either the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes. This *Examination of Conscience for High School Youth* reflects on one's relationships with God, other people and oneself; but you will find that much of it is rooted in the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes.

This examination of conscience was developed for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by the staff of the TYME OUT Youth Ministry Center, and is based on their experience with youth retreats, liturgies and the sacrament of reconciliation.

Examination of Conscience for High School Youth

Preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation is often misunderstood. People frequently view it as a laundry list of mistakes they have made instead of an opportunity to talk about what is troubling their hearts, about who they are and the changes they would like to make in their lives. The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers us that chance to speak and pray with someone who can help us with this task.

The following are questions to help you examine your conscience. Be honest. Ask yourself, “What do I do well?” “What do I want to change about myself?” and “How do I want God to transform me?”

My relationship towards God

How do I pray?

- Out of fear
- Out of need
- Out of desire for personal gain
- Out of my personal relationship and respect for God
- I don't pray

How do I attend Mass?

- Out of habit
- Bitterly because I feel I have to
- Out of fear
- Open to the experience, when it fits my schedule
- Regularly, with respect for the Eucharist
- As a part of the community
- I don't attend Mass

How do I use God's name?

- To swear
- To express anger
- Out of respect and love

How do I treat all of God's creation?

- I respect other people equally regardless of race, religion, or economic status
- I see all life as sacred even the unborn
- I am wasteful with the earth's resources
- My relationship with God is separate from everything else and has no impact on how I see or treat the world around me

My relationship towards other people

How do I treat my family?

- Help when they are in need, even when it is not convenient for me
- Tease and push around my siblings
- Tell my parents where I am going and whom I am hanging out with
- Believe that family comes first
- Fight with or ignore members of my family and make no effort to try to make peace with them
- Forgive them when I feel they've hurt me

How do I treat other people's sexuality?

- I use crude language and jokes
- I use people for my own physical pleasure
- I see sex as something to be shared by any two people who think they love each other, even outside of marriage
- I see sex as a gift from God and something that should be saved for marriage

How do I treat my teachers?

- I am rude
- I don't do my homework
- I am disruptive in class
- I do all my work and show respect
- I am bored and don't pay attention

How do I treat people that I don't know?

- Cheat or lie to get what I need
- Honor and follow through on all the promises and commitments I have made
- Kind and courteous
- I don't care because I'll never see them again
- Share what I have with others

How do I treat my friends?

- With love and respect
- Use them to gain popularity or gifts
- Make fun of them behind their backs
- Accept and understand their differences
- Forgive them when they hurt me
- Compliment and encourage them

My relationship towards myself

How do I see myself?

- Created in the image and likeness of God
- I focus only on what I don't like about myself

How do I treat myself?

- Misuse drugs, tobacco or alcohol
- Disrespect my sexuality
- Cause physical damage to my body
- I take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

How seriously do I take my education?

- Blow off my studies
- Complete my assignments
- Participate in class and school activities

How do I make choices?

- Because everyone is doing it
- It's the easiest way out of the situation
- I want to be popular
- My relationship with God tells me it's the right thing to do

Summary Reflection

Now that you have reflected on your relationship toward God, toward other people, and toward yourself - ask yourself:

- For what do I seek forgiveness?
- How do I want God to transform me?
- What will I confess and ask God's forgiveness and grace to change?