

Dear Teachers:

When I think of last year's school confessions I noticed that there is a need for a more uniform, yet short and clear, order for Reconciliation that could be used by all students. In this way, I would hope that the students would be less nervous and be able to easily remember what to do when coming to the priest for confession. For the same reason is also important that the students continue to use the same order of confession from grade to grade. I strongly encourage all teachers to take a few minutes to practice the order of confession with their students several times before our school confessions. Through repetition and practice the students will be more at ease when it comes time for Confession. However, please assure the students that the priest will guide them should they forget any of the words.

Also, I kindly ask that the students not carry the instruction sheet with them at the time of confession. Unfortunately, it becomes a source of distraction for the student.

Immediately prior to confession it is appropriate to take a few minutes to prepare the students through an examination of conscience and to pray the Act of Contrition. By praying the Act of Contrition as a class it makes the school confession time move along more quickly, rather than have each child say the prayer to the priest. There are many versions of the "**Act of Contrition**". In the bottom of the order of confession there is a simplified one that the children could use.

Most of all, I want to emphasize that it is important that the students feel calm and relaxed before Confession. This is not meant to be a nervous and anxious time for them. I hope that it will be a positive experience for them to receive the healing grace of God.

I also send you an Examination of Conscience you may use with your class.

The first step of reconciliation is an honest examination of conscience. To truly enjoy the benefits of the sacrament, a look back over past actions is required.

Even a young child making his reconciliation must look back and ask him/herself, "How've I done?"

Not an easy task, especially for youngsters unfamiliar with the practice.

Here is an examination of conscience for children using the Lord's Prayer as a guideline.