

The point about confession is for you to wipe the slate clean with God. So you need to take a look at yourself and your life and think about the things that stand between you and God. Now is the time to clear away these obstacles once and for all. The examination of conscience below may help you to take an honest look at yourself and your relationship to God:

If I enjoy the good things of life, that's no sin;
But it is a sin if I make them into my god and try to get hold of them at all costs.

If I want to earn a decent wage, that's no sin.
But it is a sin if I make wealth my one and only aim. And if I'm unwilling to share and have compassion for others for fear of missing out on life.

If I insist on my rights, that's no sin.
But it is a sin if I abuse these rights, if I become inconsiderate and hardhearted or disrespect the rights of others.

If I experience sexual desires and impulses, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I give way to my impulses or use others to satisfy my desires.

If I find it hard to like some people, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I treat them as though they were not God's beloved children every bit as much as I am.

If I criticize other people, that's not necessarily a sin.

But it is a sin if I do so hastily or without charity or if I thereby demean or injure other people.

If feelings of envy, malice, or anger rise up within me, that's not in itself a sin.

But it is a sin if I do not try to overcome these feelings but, instead, let my actions be influenced by them.

If I talk about others, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I gossip about others or say mean or spiteful things about them.

If I keep silent in situations of conflict, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I keep silent when others are being disparaged, slandered, or lied about.

If I get into arguments, that's not necessarily a sin.

But it is a sin if I pick a quarrel, don't listen to others, don't try to understand them, or am unwilling to make peace.

If my heart often seems empty when I pray, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I think I don't need to pray or if I don't even take the trouble to open my heart to God and listen for his voice.

If I am sometimes unsure of my faith, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if I withdraw from the community of believers, if I regularly refuse to take part in their worship, or if I think earthly things more important than heavenly ones.

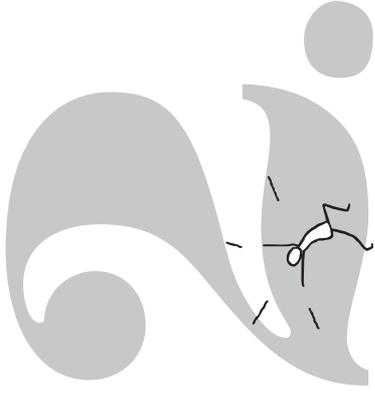
If I make plans for my life, that's no sin.

But it is a sin if my faith in God plays no part in them, if I no longer care about the fact that my life each day lies in his hands.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN "SÜNDE IST ... DIE LIEBE LEUGNEN",
ED. BERNHARD RIEDL (ARCHDIOCESE OF COLOGNE, 2008).



ORIGINAL YOUCAT CONFESSION GUIDE



So now we get down to the nitty-gritty: The moment has come when you are going to allow God to do a spring cleaning of your heart. And the more honestly you let this happen, the clearer and more mature your faith will become. This is how it happens:

You go into the confession booth or the confession room.

The priest welcomes you.

You make the **Sign of the Cross** and say *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

The priest may now say a short prayer.

You respond to it by saying *“Amen.”*

You can start your confession by telling the priest when you last went to confession:

“It is about ... weeks/months since my last confession.” This helps the priest form an idea of your personal situation.

After this you can say the things you want to confess. If you’re not sure about anything during your confession, you can always ask the priest, who will help and advise you.

You can conclude your confession by saying something like: *“I am sorry for all these things, and I want to make a fresh start with Jesus.”*

The priest will now give a few words of advice as to how to avoid these sins and do better in the future.

The priest will give you a simple task to do, usually a prayer, as a sign of penance.

Finally, **the priest** will speak the wonderful words of absolution, which free you from your sins:

God the Father of mercies, through the death and Resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

You make the Sign of the Cross again during these final words and respond. *“Amen.”*

The priest says: *“Your sins are forgiven you. Go in peace.”*

You respond *“Amen.”*

After your confession, you can remain in the church for a while, to say a silent prayer and thank God in your own words for his forgiveness.

