

The Light is ON for You

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“How to Go to Confession” Workshop Guide

Background:

The Office of Evangelization learned of a parish-based initiative connected to The Light Is ON that has been quite successful over the past decade. Ten years ago the parish invited those offered a short half-hour presentation on “How to Go to Confession.” The workshop walked people through the steps and answered questions. The first week it was offered, the staff prepared for 20 people. 120 came and every year since 10-20 people attend the workshop, now offered annually 30 minutes before the Lenten Reconciliation Service.

Program:

We invite you to consider offering this opportunity on one of the Wednesday evenings in Lent or before your Reconciliation Service. The steps to a successful workshop are:

- Identifying the workshop leader
- Choosing the day and time (connected to the availability of the sacrament)
- Promoting the workshop through the parish bulletin, website, pulpit announcements
- Choosing a space to set up chairs
- Preparing to use role-play or walk-through to demonstrate the steps in the sacrament
- Allowing time for questions
- Invite people to make their way to the church for Confession

Resources/Equipment:

- Examination of Conscience pew cards provided by the archdiocese in connection with The Light Is ON.
- Three-minute Video presentation with Fr. Bill Byrne on the gift of reconciliation and how to go to Confession. <http://thelightison.org/guide-to-confession/>.
- A workshop leader. Please contact your Diocesan Contact (see first page) if you would like the names of workshop leaders available to offer the workshop at your parish.

See below for the Outline of the Steps for the Sacrament of Reconciliation page. The page may be copied or printed from www.TheLightIsON.org and used as a handout for participants during the workshop.

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Outline of the Steps for Sacrament of Reconciliation

For use during the “How to Go to Confession” Workshop in conjunction with the Confession Pew Cards

There are three basic components to consider in preparing for the Sacrament of Penance: sorrow for our sins, an examination of conscience followed by naming the sins brought to light to a priest, and finally the desire to make up for our sins and amend our lives.

Prayer and reflection before getting in line will help you to make a sincere and complete confession.

1. **Begin** with a prayer to be open to the Holy Spirit speaking in your heart.
2. **Examine your conscience** – consider your actions in light of Christ’s teaching. In light of Christ’s moral teaching be mindful of both the things you have done, and the things that you have failed to do. Remember sins are not merely broken rules, but are those actions that rupture our relationship with God and others. If you need more guidance, there are many models of examination of conscience based on the Beatitudes and/or Ten Commandments.
3. **Enter the confessional** and begin by making the Sign of the Cross and saying “Bless me Father for I have sinned,” followed by stating how long it has been since your last confession.
4. After the priest acknowledges your greeting, **confess your sins** and their frequency. The priest may ask clarifying questions or give you counsel.
5. The priest will ask you to **make an Act of Contrition**. If you have not memorized one of the Acts of Contrition of the Church, simply make a statement that acknowledges your sorrow for your sins and expresses your commitment to amend your life.
6. **Receive** the words of absolution from the priest. Listen carefully to this beautiful prayer of forgiveness. When it is complete, you respond, “Amen.”
7. The priest will dismiss you with a **sign of peace**.
8. In a spirit of thanksgiving **perform your penance** as soon as possible.

Take a Confession pew card to help you with the examination of conscience, the steps during Confession, and the Act of Contrition.

If, at any point during your confession you have questions, ask the priest for guidance! He is here to help you in this conversation.

Additional resources and information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation are available online at www.TheLightIsON.org and www.LaLuzENCENDIDA.org.