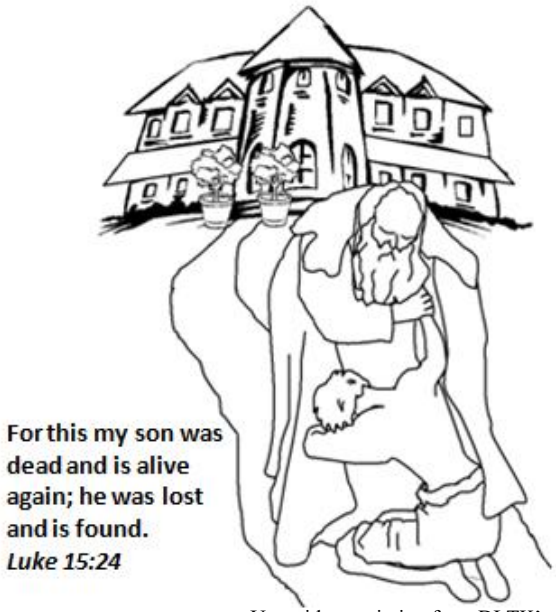
The Mystery of Repentance
A Ukrainian Catholic Guide to Confession
For Children

Do you remember the prodigal son? He had left his home and family looking for something new and exciting. He spent many months doing all the wrong things. When all his money was gone and life became very hard, he decided to go home. Life, he knew, was better there, even for the servants.



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The son returned to his father, and told him the truth about everything he had done. He was not afraid. He knew his father loved him.

We, as God's children also need to say," I have made a mistake; I have sinned. Father, I have offended you; my God, I am sorry; I ask for pardon; I will try again, because I rely on your strength and I believe in your love." (John Paul II)

Behold, my child, Christ stands here invisibly and receives your confession. Therefore do not be ashamed, do not be afraid, hide nothing from Him; but tell Him without hesitation all the things you have done, and so you shall have pardon from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Coming Clean:
Why we need to tell our sins

Why should we go to confession? When we were baptized, God completely forgave all our sins. Because of this, we are united as God's children and are members of his Church. When we sin, we break this union, so we need to go to confession to ask God to forgive us and to help us be better children. When we do this, we are again in union with God.

What is sin? We sin when we think, do or say things that hurt other people or ourselves: when we do this we also hurt God.

Why do we confess to a priest? The priest is present in the name of God. When we confess we are confessing to God, not the priest. The priest has been given to us to help us. He hears our confessions and forgives us in God's name. What we tell the priest is a secret, and he tells nobody what we tell him.
The priest teaches us about God's forgiveness and love, and tells us how to be better Christians. He usually asks us to say a prayer or two to make up for the wrong that was done. He may suggest that we do something else also, such as asking someone to forgive us or returning something that is not ours.

How often should we go to confession? We should go to confession whenever we feel that we have hurt somebody, ourselves or God. Because confession helps us to be good, we should go often.

How should you prepare for confession?

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to get ready for confession.
2. Thank God for everything He has given you (and He has given you ***everything***!)
3. Think about how you acted towards other people, animals, and the earth. What have you said or done that you shouldn't have? What have you ***not*** done or said that you should have? Using a guide such as the one in this pamphlet will help you to remember.
4. Thank God for all the good things you have done.
5. Be sorry for the bad things you have done or said. Remember that it is very important to promise to try not to do these things again. Pray for forgiveness. Say the act of contrition:
   Dear God, I am sorry I have ever thought, said, or done anything to offend you. You have been so good to me and I have been so ungrateful to You. Please forgive all my sins and I will really try, with Your help, not to displease You again.
6. If you have hurt anyone, ask their forgiveness.

Examination of Conscience for Children

MY FAITH:

- Does God take first place in your life?
- Do you pray every day?
- Do you go to church services every Sunday and Holy Day?
- Do you like to go to church and church activities?
- Do you come to church late and/or leave early?
- Have you worked or shopped on Sunday?
- Have you tried to make Sunday a family day and day of rest?
- Have you remembered to thank God for all the gifts He has given you – your faith, your family, your health, your mind, and your friends?
- Have you ever used the words "God" or "Jesus" when you were angry? Or made fun of these words?
- Have you used bad language?
- Are you ashamed of being Catholic? Have you lied about being Catholic?
- Do you believe in lucky charms instead of God's help?
- Have you made sure that the things you do don't hurt the earth?
- When you have done something very wrong, have you gone to Communion before confessing this sin?
- Have you not told all of your sins or tried to make them sound not so bad in confession?

MY FAMILY:

- Have you disrespected or disobeyed your parents? Have you lied to them?
- Have you hurt your parents by something you have said or done?
- Have you thanked your parents for their goodness and concern?
- Have you thanked your parents for what they have given you?
- Have you helped around the house or do you have to be nagged?
- Have you tried to get along with your brothers and sisters?
- Have you bullied your brothers and sisters?
- Have you set a good example for your brothers and sisters?
- Have you ever hurt your brothers or sisters?

MY FRIENDS, OTHERS AND SELF:

- Have you listened to the grownups in charge? (priests, sisters, police, teachers, government officials, supervisors, etc.)?
- Have you misbehaved at school?
- Have you really meant it when you said you were sorry? Did you apologize soon after?
- Have you forgiven others quickly? Have you meant it?
- Have you shared your time and what you have with family, friends, and people who are not as lucky or blessed as you are? Have you helped those who need help when you could?

- Have you gotten mad when you had to share your friends?
- Have you always told the truth? Or have you lied to make yourself look good, or to make someone else look bad or even get them into trouble? Have you lied to protect yourself from punishment?
- Have you cheated at school?
- Are you jealous of what others have or what they can do?
- Have you said mean things about others behind their backs?
- Have you hit or fought with anyone?
- Have you said mean things to others or made fun of others?
- Have you told others to do bad things?
- Have you stopped talking to someone because you are mad at them?
- Have you tried to love everyone, even if you don't like them?
- Have you treated others' bodies with respect?
- Have you treated your own body with respect?
- Have you dressed in a way that drew attention to your body?
- Have you chosen books, movies, TV, internet, video/computer games or music that you wouldn't choose if Jesus was right there beside you?
- Have you stolen anything?
- Have you wrecked or harmed other people's things just for fun?
- Have you cheated anyone?
- Have you returned things you borrowed right after using them and in good condition?
- Have you wished that bad things would happen to other people?
- Are there people you don't want to be with because they are different from you?

How to Celebrate the Mystery of Repentance
How to go to Confession

When you are ready to make your confession, go into the confessional and kneel.

Child: (+)In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Glory to Jesus Christ! (Slava Isusu Khrystu!)
Priest: Glory be forever! (Slava na viky!)
Child: I confess to Almighty God, One in the Holy Trinity, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to all the Saints, and to you, Father, all my sins.
Tell your sins to the priest. Tell the whole truth and don't make excuses. You may want to take a list with you to help you to remember what you want to say. If you have any questions or problems you should also talk about these. When you are finished say: **These are all the sins I remember. I am truly sorry for all my sins.**

Father will speak to you and tell you how you can be a better person and more like Jesus. When he is finished, he will ask you to make your act of penitence:

(+) God, be merciful to me a sinner.
(+) God cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me.
(+) I have sinned without number, forgive me, O Lord.

The priest will forgive your sins in the name of God, and he will bless you before you leave. After your confession, say the prayer Father has asked you to say or do what he has asked of you. Do this as soon as possible after your confession. Remember to thank God for His forgiveness and try to be a better person.