

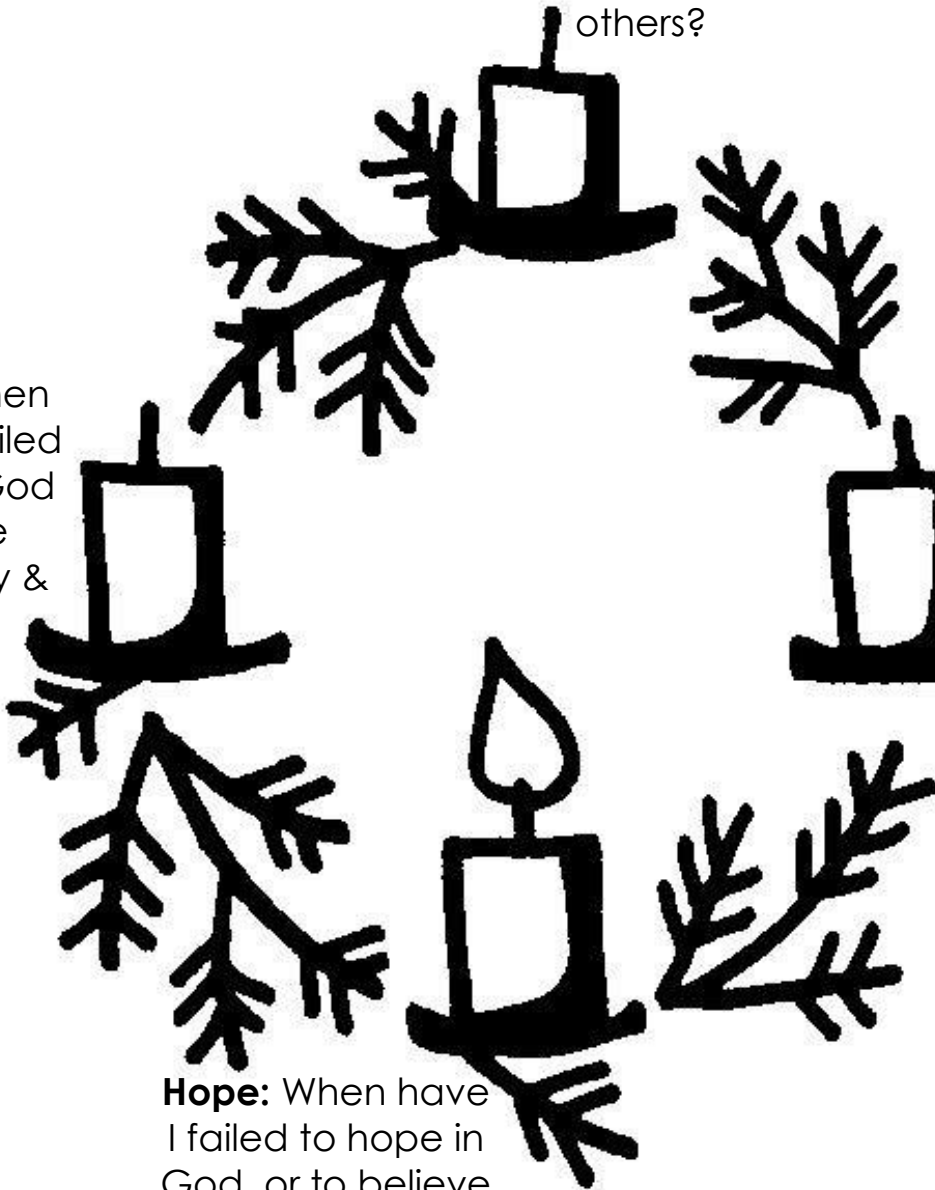
An Advent Examination of Conscience

Joy: When have I failed to bring joy to others?

Love: When have I failed to love God or to love my family & friends?

Peace: When have I failed to make peace or to speak with peace?

Hope: When have I failed to hope in God, or to believe in myself or others?



BEFORE YOU GO TO CONFESSION

PRAY: ASK GOD TO HELP YOU PREPARE TO MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION

“O God, I love you and I wish to love you more every day. Help me to see how I have sinned. Help me to be sorry for my sins. Help me to make up my mind to be better in the future. Amen.”

EXAMINE: THINK ABOUT HOW YOU HAVE HURT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF, OTHERS AND GOD

Before you go to see the priest, ask yourself: “What have I done that I know was wrong?”

- HOPE: *Have I forgotten to say my prayers? * Have I been jealous, gossiped, or told lies?*
- PEACE: *Have I used bad language? * Have I spoken badly about anyone? * Have I been mean to other people? * Have I held onto a grudge instead of forgiving the other person?*
- JOY: *Have I been bad at home or at school? * Have I bugged my parents to buy me things? * Have I taken things that don't belong to me?*
- LOVE: *Did I miss Sunday Mass and was it my fault? * Have I hurt anyone or played unfairly? * Have I listened to my parents and teachers?*

Use the empty space around and inside the wreath on the other side of this paper to jot down some notes about the times you have sinned recently. For example, if your sin is that you punched your little brother, you could write “punch” or “brother.” This is between you and Jesus, not to turn in. ***You can and should bring the paper with you to church, to remind you of your sins to tell the priest during your Confession and to help you remember the order of the steps and the words you will say.***

AT CHURCH: Steps to a Good Confession

CONFESS: CONFESS YOUR SINS TO JESUS THROUGH THE PRIEST

1. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross and say: **“Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It has been ___(weeks/months/years) since my last confession and these are my sins.”**
2. Tell your sins to the priest. You can just focus on the sins that are most heavy in your heart.
3. When you have said your sins, say: **“for these and for all of my sins I am truly sorry.”**

RECEIVE: THE PRIEST WILL ASSIGN YOU A PENANCE AND HELP YOU TURN TOWARDS GOD

4. Listen to the priest. He may say things to help you better follow Jesus.
5. The priest will give you a Penance, some “spiritual homework”: he may ask you to say a prayer or do something nice for someone to help you come closer to God.

CONTRITION: SHOW YOUR DESIRE TO CHANGE

6. Pray the Act of Contrition: **“My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.”**

ABSOLUTION: THROUGH THE PRIEST, JESUS FORGIVES YOUR SINS

7. The priest will hold his hand over you and pray the ‘Prayer of Absolution’.
8. You reply: **“Amen”** and make the Sign of the Cross again.

GO!: CONGRATULATIONS, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN!

9. Make up your mind to try to love God with all your heart, soul and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself.
10. Don't forget to do your Penance as soon as you can.