

How to Go to Confession

1. Pray, examine your conscience to remember your sins, ask God to help you remember your sins, to be sorry, and to turn back to him.
2. When you go into the confessional, the priest may give you a blessing or greeting. He may read a brief Scripture passage.
3. **Start your confession by making the Sign of the Cross, while you say: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been about _____ (weeks/months/years) since my last confession.”**

It’s okay if you don’t remember how long it has been. You can estimate or just say that you don’t remember.

4. **Confess your sins to the priest.** If you don’t know how to confess something or you feel uneasy, ask the priest to help you. Nothing that you say to the priest will ever be repeated. We must confess all serious (mortal) sins that we remember. (For a sin to be mortal it must be serious, the person has to know it is a mortal sin before they do it, and he or she must do it on purpose and freely.) It is also good to confess other (venial) sins, especially if we struggle with them, but we don’t have to.
5. After confessing, say: **“I am sorry for these and all of my sins.”**
6. Listen while the priest talks with you. He might offer you advice and encouragement. He might ask you questions so that he can better understand your situation. He might also ask you questions to help you remember your sins.

The priest will assign you a penance. If you don’t understand or can’t do the penance, tell the priest and he will change it or help you.

7. The priest will then ask you to **pray an Act of Contrition.**

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

If you forget how to say an act of contrition, ask for help.

8. **Then, listen while the priest, acting in the person of Christ, absolves you from your sins.** This prayer ends with the priest saying, “I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen”
9. After confession, give thanks to God! All your sins are forgiven! Do your penance as soon as you can. It’s usually easiest to do this before you leave the church.