

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

Enter the confessional and greet the priest.

Begin by making the sign of the cross and say “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It’s been [however many days/months/years] since my last confession.”

List your sins.

Mention venial (everyday) sins and mortal sins, which are more serious. Try to be thorough, but it’s OK if you don’t remember every single sin. It may be more of a conversation, as the priest may ask questions or comment. It doesn’t have to be a non-stop laundry list of sins. When you’re done, conclude by saying “I’m sorry for these and all my sins.”

Listen to the priest.

When you’re done confessing your sins, the priest may offer some guidance and suggest ways to avoid sins in the future. He’ll then give you a penance, which could be a form of prayer, a service or some work of mercy. Often, you’ll be able to complete your penance while still at church.

Pray the Act of Contrition.

This prayer is short and simple: *Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee and I detest all of my sins, because of thy just punishments, but, most of all because they offend thee, my God, who are all good and worthy of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.*

Receive absolution from God, via the priest.

The priest will say the following prayer to absolve you of your sins: *God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God grant 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.* Make the sign of the cross and close with “Amen.”

Adapted from Hallow, <https://hallow.com/blog/how-to-go-to-confession-the-sacrament-of-penance-reconciliation/>