

## Confession: A “How To” Guide

Forgotten how to go to confession, or never learned? Here are the “How To’s” for the Sacrament of Penance (i.e., confession).

*Penitent:* the one confessing sins.

*Confessor:* the Priest receiving the confession.

1. The Penitent enters the confessional and kneels behind a screen (a chair is provided for those physically unable to kneel).
2. The Penitent, making the sign of the cross, says, ***Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been \_\_\_\_\_ (state amount of time) since my last confession. These are my sins.***
3. The Penitent confesses his sins. The Confessor listens, but he may ask questions if something the Penitent has said is unclear or in order to lead the Penitent to a more thorough examination of conscience. (*NB. All mortal sins – each kind and the number of times committed – must be confessed. All venial sins should be confessed.*)
4. When the Penitent finishes confessing, he signifies this by saying: ***For these and all my sins, I ask forgiveness of God and absolution from you, Father.*** The Confessor may offer some advice or counsel, so that the Penitent may take the necessary steps to amend his life.
5. The Confessor then gives a penance (usually a prayer or a good work) and then instructs the Penitent to make an Act of Contrition. There are different formulas. One version is usually in the confessional.
6. After the Penitent has made an Act of Contrition, the Confessor imparts absolution with the sacramental formula. The Penitent makes the Sign of the Cross at the absolution.
7. The Confessor concludes with these or similar words: ***Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.*** The Penitent responds, saying: ***Thanks be to God.***
8. The Penitent leaves the confessional and fulfills the penance as soon as possible.

### The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. And I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishment but most of all because they offend Thee, my God Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

“Be courageous. Go to confession.” – Pope Francis