

## How To Go To Reconciliation (Confession)

**Before you go...Examine your conscience**, that is, reflect on that sins you have committed. Think about times you have chosen to do wrong or failed to do good. It's even alright to make a list to bring with you to confession if that helps.

1. **Introduction.** When you come before the priest, begin by making the sign of the Cross (praying the words out loud), and continue by saying, **“Bless me Father, I have sinned. It has been (how long) since my last confession. These are my sins...”**
2. **Confession. List the sins** you committed that came to mind when doing your examination of conscience. **Don't be too general** (like, “I haven't been a good person”), but a lot of **detail is not necessary either** (you don't need to tell the whole story about how the sin came about). If you are not sure something is a sin, just ask the priest. This isn't counseling, so unless you ask, the priest won't likely give you advice. He'll move on to...
3. **Penance.** The priest will suggest **something for you to do or pray** as a response to God's mercy. You'll have to remember what this is and do it after the confession is over, so pay attention.
4. **Contrition.** The Priest will then ask you to pray your “Act of Contrition,” demonstrating your sorrow for your sins. This needs to be prayed aloud for the priest to hear but need not adhere exactly to one formula. One very common one you could use is:  
**“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.”**
5. **Absolution.** Don't get up to leave after that prayer, because the best part is yet to come: the priest will extend his hands in your direction and he will pray the **Prayer of Absolution**: *“God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his son, has reconciled the world to himself ... I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*
6. **Conclusion.** The priest will then likely say something like, “God has freed you from your sin. Go in Peace.” To which you can respond, **“Thanks be to God.”**
7. **After you leave...**Don't forget to do your penance. If it is saying certain prayers, its best to do it right away in the church before you forget.