

How I Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Before I Go: *I spend time preparing myself for confession. I use an examination of conscience to help me remember what sins I have committed. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me see my sins as sins—the wrong things I have done and the good things I chose not to do. I may choose to write them down so I won't forget any sins.*

I repent in my heart of my sins because I want to love Jesus and grow in holiness—I remind myself that going to confession means I am joining God in fighting against my sins. God is not angry or disappointed in me—He wants to heal me and help me.

The Steps of Going to Confession

1. When it is my turn, I enter the Reconciliation Room—I kneel down or sit, and Father greets me. We make the sign of the cross together and he prays that I will make a good confession.
2. I begin my confession by saying, “Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been about _____ (tell how long) since my last confession. These are my sins:”
3. **Confession:** I tell Father (or read from my list) the sins I have committed since my last confession. I am honest, clear and brief—I don't explain all the situations or try to excuse my behavior. If I know I have committed a sin, I tell it—I don't hide anything. I know that when I speak about my sins in the confessional, I am really speaking to Jesus through the priest—it is Jesus who hears my confession and offers me forgiveness. When I am done with the list of my sins, I finish by saying: “For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry.”
4. **Penance:** I listen to Father as he gives me suggestions or encouragement. Father assigns me a penance—some action that will help me move closer to Jesus. My penance might be to do something to repair the damage of my sins or it might be to say some prayers to bring me closer to God. I agree to do my penance as soon as I possibly can.

5. Contrition: Father asks me to make an “Act of Contrition.” I pray the Act of Contrition out loud—I can memorize the prayer, or I can read it off a prayer card in the reconciliation room. I mean what I say about being sorry for my sins and wanting to do better with God’s help.

6. Absolution: Father holds his hand over my head and prays the prayer of Absolution over me—this prayer brings the mighty power of God into my soul and cleanses me of my sins. Father prays this prayer in the name of God and in the name of the Church. The Holy Spirit enters my soul and my sins are erased—they are gone! When Father says, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” I trace the sign of the cross on myself.



7. Satisfaction: I thank Father and leave the Reconciliation Room. I kneel in the Church and offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for His healing and forgiveness. If my penance was to offer some prayers, I pray those prayers right away. I rejoice in God’s healing mercy and I leave with my soul as pure and clean as it was on the day of my Baptism!

AN 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.