

How to go to Confession

Prepare to go to confession by thinking about your sins and make a firm commitment, asking God's help, not to sin again.

Prayer Before Confession

Come Holy Spirit, into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess, and grant me your grace to confess them fully, humbly, and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again. O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, intercede for me through the Passion of Your Son, that I may obtain the grace to make a good confession. All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a sinner, that I may repent from my sins, and that my heart may be forever united with yours in eternal love. Amen.

Rite of Reconciliation

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Penitent: Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been (how long?) since my last confession, and these are my sins: (confess your sins).

Priest: (Gives you a penance)

Penitent: (Pray the Act of Contrition):

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

Priest: (gives you absolution)

Priest: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is Good.

Penitent: For His mercy endures forever.
or

(**Priest:** Go in peace. **Penitent:** Thanks be to God.)

Penitent: recite or do your penance as soon as possible.

Examination of Conscience for a Good Confession

1. **I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.** Did I fail to love God, to make God first in my life, to thank Him, trust Him, love Him as He deserves? Did I fail to pray? Have I doubted or denied my faith? Was I careless or distracted in saying my prayers? Do I give God time every day in prayer? Have I been involved in magic, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, Horoscopes, the occult?
2. **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.** Did I curse or swear? Did I use God's Name in vain, carelessly, by blasphemy? Have I used foul language?
3. **Remember to keep holy the Sabbath.** Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation? Did I leave Mass early without a good reason? Have I been to Communion at least once a year? Did I receive Communion in a state of serious sin? Did I receive confession recently? In any of my previous confessions, did I lie to or deliberately conceal something from the past? Did I do unnecessary work on Sunday?
4. **Honor your father and your mother.** Did I honor and obey my parents? Respect my brothers and sisters? Respect my elders or others with lawful authority? Did I fail to help at home or spend time with my family?
5. **You shall not kill.** Did I give in to feelings of anger or jealousy? Did I keep hatred in my heart? Did I fight, give bad example, or cause scandal? Have I been abusive? Have I abused alcohol or drugs? Have I had in any way procured, permitted or encouraged abortion? Have I thought about or attempted suicide?
6. **You shall not commit adultery.** Was I immodest in dress, speech or behavior? Did I look at pornography, impure books, videos, websites, etc? Am I guilty of masturbation (impurity with self?) Fornication (premarital sex) adultery (sex with a married person, or extramarital sex) or contraception (by pills, devices, etc.) Have I procured sterilization? Do I live chastely according to my state in life (married, single, ordained?) Do I avoid occasions of impurity? Have I tried to marry outside the Church?
7. **You shall not steal** Have I taken what is not mine? What or how much? Did I return it or make up for what I have stolen? Have I cheated on tests or homework / stolen intellectual property? Did I waste time at work? Do I avoid laziness, idleness? Do I seek the attention/praise due to others?
8. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** Have I lied, gossiped? Talked about another behind his back? Do I always tell the truth? Am I sincere? Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential? Am I critical, negative, judgmental, or uncharitable in my talk?
9. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.** Have I consented to impure thoughts? Have I encouraged them by stares, curiosity or impure conversations? Did I neglect to control my imagination or desire other people? Have I been divorced and begun dating before procuring and annulment? Have I been an occasion of sin for others by dating after being divorced, without procuring and annulment?
10. **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.** Is my heart greedy? Am I jealous of what another has? Am I envious of others because I don't have what they have? Am I moody or gloomy? Do I work, study and keep busy to counter idle thoughts? Am I critical, negative or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Is my heart set on earthly possessions instead of the treasures in Heaven? Do I struggle with being satisfied with what I have?