

How to go to Confession

1. Examination of conscience.

Kneel in church and ask God to help you know your sins. Try to remember, as well as you can, what sins you have committed since your last Confession and how many times or how often you committed each one. Tell God that you are sorry for your sins. Then go over to the confessional booth and pray while waiting your turn to go in.

1. In the confessional.

Kneel down and wait until the priest opens the little window. Make the Sign of the Cross and say: "Forgive me, Father for I have sinned; it has been (one week or one month or whatever length of time it is) since my last Confession. These are my sins:

Name the sins and tell how many times you committed each one. Then say: "I am sorry for these sins and all the sins of my whole life, especially..." (here name some sin already confessed).

The priest will then give you some prayers as penance, and perhaps advise you. While the priest is saying the words of forgiveness ("absolution"), you should say the Act of Contrition.

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

Then the priest will say, "God bless you", or "Go in peace", or something like that. You say, "Thank you, Father", make the Sign of the Cross and go out of the confessional.

After your Confession. - Go back to your pew, kneel down, say your penance and thank God for the Sacrament of Penance.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Remember that you can go to any priest anywhere. The priest does not know who is confessing to him. He cannot see you, and it is difficult to recognize a voice speaking in a whisper. You do not tell the priest your name or give any details that would identify you.

2. Speak to the priest in a whisper. Tell your sins briefly; do not go into detail. However, in confessing a sin of impurity, you have to tell what kind it is (thought, desire, adultery, fornication, etc.). In confessing a sin of theft, tell the amount or value of the object stolen.

3. If you are not sure whether or not you were guilty of some sin, confess the sin but tell the priest you are not sure you committed it. Example: I was tempted by impure thoughts and I may have consented to them.

4. Go to Confession often and regularly, even though you have no mortal sins to confess. You should not think of confession as just a way of getting rid of your sins. Remember that in Confession you receive the Sacrament of Penance. This Sacrament not only gives you grace, but also helps you to overcome future temptations. It is difficult to lead a good life without going to Confession often. Go once a week if possible; once a month at the very least. (Some Saints confessed daily.)