

STEPS TO MAKE A GOOD **CONFESSION**

BEFORE GOING TO CONFESSION

1. Pray. Ask God to give you the grace to make a good confession.
2. Examine your conscience. Reflect on your life, trying to recall all the times you sinned against God since your last confession. Use an Examination of Conscience to help you.
3. Be truly sorry for your sins & make the resolution to avoid these sins in the future.

DURING CONFESSION

1. Upon entering the confessional take your place. You may choose to either confess anonymously by going behind the screen or by going face-to-face if this option is available. Depending on the confessional, you may either kneel or sit.
2. Greet the priest. Then make the sign of the Cross and say the following: "Bless me father, for I have sinned. It has been (state how many days/weeks/months/years) since my last confession. These are my sins."
3. At this time, confess your sins briefly and clearly. Remember that for a confession to be valid all mortal sins must be confessed. If you do not know whether a sin is mortal or not, you can ask the priest. Answer any questions he might ask you without hiding anything out of shame or fear. The Lord greatly desires to forgive you, but if you hold anything back from him, it won't be forgiven because he gives us the free choice to bring it to him or not.
4. The priest will then give you some words of advice and/or encouragement to help you become a better person and a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.
5. Following this, he will assign you a penance which you are to do when you leave the confessional. It might be something like saying a few prayers, doing an act of charity, or making some sacrifice. Whatever it is, make sure that you understand it clearly and that you remember to do it later.
6. After giving you the penance, the priest will ask you to say the Act of Contrition. A good Act of Contrition might be as follows:

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. Amen.

7. When you are finished praying the Act of Contrition, the priest will say the Prayer of Absolution. Listen attentively to that prayer, bless yourself as he makes the Sign of the Cross & at the end of the prayer, answer, "Amen" The priest then concludes by saying, "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace" & you respond, "Thanks be to God."

AFTER CONFESSION

1. Say a prayer of thanksgiving. Give thanks to God for the gift of his infinite mercy and for the sacrament you have just received.
2. Do your penance as soon as possible so that you will not forget to do it, & do your best to work to amend your life as you promised to do in your Act of Contrition.