

Chapter 35 Activity: Ten Steps to Celebrate Reconciliation

1. Choose a Time

Parishes usually have communal celebrations during Advent and Lent, and private celebrations sometime during each week.

2. Examine Your Conscience

Take time to think about your sins. Focus on habits that are hard to change—areas that need Jesus' healing and forgiveness.

3. Go to the Priest

As Father welcomes you, make the Sign of the Cross.

4. Listen to God's Word

The priest may read a passage from the Bible.

5. Confess Your Sins

Tell the priest your sins. He may ask questions or give advice.

6. Receive a Penance

The priest will give you a task called a penance. It is a sign that you are sorry and want to change. It may be a prayer or a loving action.

7. Say an Act of Contrition

Tell God you are sorry. Pray in your own words, or say an Act of Contrition such as the following:

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.

(*Rite of Penance*, 45)

8. Receive Absolution

The priest prays to God to forgive your sins. He says:

God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and the resurrection of
his Son,
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the
forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the Church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins,
in the name of the Father, and of the
Son, and of the Holy
Spirit.¹

(CCC, 1449)

The priest blesses you, and you make
the Sign of the Cross.

9. Leave

The priest may give you a final blessing.
You say "Amen" and leave.

10. Do Your Penance!

Don't forget to do the penance the priest
assigned to you. Do it as soon as possible!

(The prayer on this handout is from the English translation of *Rite of Penance* © 1974, International Commission on English in the Liturgy [ICEL], number 45, as found in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, volume one, prepared by the ICEL, a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990]. Copyright © 1990 by the Order of St. Benedict, Collegeville, MN. Used with permission of the ICEL. Published with the approval of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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Endnote Cited in a Quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition

1. *Ordo paenitentiae* 46: formula of absolution.

