

Overview for April- Confession

You may have heard the saying, “confession is good for the soul.” After reading this month's release, we hope you agree! A lot of resources about confession come from the Catholic tradition yet this spiritual practice is just as important for those of us in the Protestant tradition since confession is a beautiful way to deepen our relationship with God. When we acknowledge our faults and mistakes, we also open the door to experience God’s redemptive grace and forgiveness.

Like most spiritual practices, confession is multi-faceted, so we have included some resources on variations and complementary practices (specifically spiritual friendships, examen, and self-examination). Hopefully, these practices will help you and your youth engage with the practice of confession in a way that enhances your group’s experience of, and relationship with, the Lord. Because we have pulled resources from a variety of sources, please be sure to read them carefully to decide which parts of them make sense within *your* context.

While confession is an important part of our faith, it is worth remembering that there can be embarrassment, shame, and confusion around it. After all some people think, *“If God is loving, accepting, and all-knowing why confess? Don’t I already know the outcome? Why go through the whole process?”* But we believe that relationship is a two-way street so we confess, not because God is unaware of our sins, but because sometimes we are unaware of them until we are in his presence; because knowing something and being able to admit it are different things; and because God wants us to trust him with all aspects of ourselves. With all that in mind, we hope that this month your group will begin to see confession as an extension of God’s love and an opportunity for deepening relationship.

If you have any questions, or would like to recommend a resource to add to this release, please contact CBOQ Youth by emailing Meghan at mmatthews@baptist.ca

Blessings to you this month,

The CBOQ Youth team



Scriptures about Confession

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Psalms 32:5

Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Leviticus 5:5

When anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned.

Romans 10:10

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Romans 3:23-24

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Daniel 9:5

We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.

What other scriptures can you find?



LESSON SAMPLE (ONE HOUR VERSION)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Answer questions about their spiritual lives
- Develop spiritual friendships that may lead to deeper accountability

MATERIALS NEEDED

In Person:

Necessary Materials

- Pictures (enough options for 2-3 times the number of participants, i.e., if your group has 10 people, you should try to have 20-30 pictures).
 - Note: these pictures can be from a variety of sources: postcards, photos, clippings from magazines, or images from other sources. There are formal options for this (search *Visual Explorer Facilitator Set* if you are interested) but these are not necessary, just make sure you have a good variety of images.
- Bibles, or scripture printed out (see appendix 1)

Additional Materials

- Large paper/whiteboard
- Markers
- Journal/paper
- Writing implements

Synchronous Online:

- Use a random image generator (example: <https://randomwordgenerator.com/picture.php>) alternatively, you could use an open-source picture platform (example: <https://www.pexels.com/>)
- Bibles, or copy and paste the verses into the chat

Asynchronous Online:

- Use a random image generator, or open-source picture platform options to participants in advance.
- Journal, or other means of writing reflections.
- Bible, or another way to read scripture



SET UP

In Person:

- 1) Set out your pictures. To allow participants to look at (and choose) pictures without pressure, try to set them up around the edge of your space (i.e., close to the walls). This will allow participants to walk around to view them, rather than pulling them off a wall/pile in full view of others.
- 2) Depending on the size of your group, you can either set up one area for people to gather in or set up multiple areas. In either case, the setup should facilitate conversation. Have participants sit in a configuration where they will be able to see one another—around a table, in a circle on the floor, etc.
- 3) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list (or make up your own):
 - What is your faith like?
 - How do you view God?
 - What do you need from a spiritual friend?
 - What do you need from this group?
 - How do you think God sees you?
 - What do you need to confess?

Synchronous Online:

- 1) Depending on the size of your group, set up breakout rooms
- 2) Send lesson/instructions to all group leaders (especially if they will be leading breakout rooms)
- 3) Send the link to either a random image generator, or to the open-source photo platform (either in advance, or through the chat function in your platform).
- 4) Decide if you want to enable screen sharing for all participants, OR let participants send links to their image via chat
- 5) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list (or make up your own):
 - What is your faith like?
 - How do you view God?
 - What do you need from a spiritual friend?
 - What do you need from this group?
 - How do you think God sees you?
 - What do you need to confess?



Asynchronous Online:

1) Send the link to either a random image generator, or to the open-source photo platform (either in advance, or through the chat function in your platform).

2) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list, and send that question to the participants:

- What is your faith like?
- How do you view God?
- What do you need from a spiritual friend?
- What do you need from this group?
- How do you think God sees you?
- What do you need to confess?

3) Let participants know they will need a bible, and a journal/paper to take notes on

PREAMBLE (1-2 minutes)

Say: Today we are going to practice talking about our personal spirituality. This is sometimes an awkward thing to do because we *don't do it regularly*, so it feels like it's something we shouldn't talk about. But that isn't true! In fact, some people develop deep friendships *because* they talk about their walk with Jesus openly, honestly, and frequently.

MINDS ON (10 minutes)

In Person:

Say: Let's see what the bible has to say about friendship.

Invite: participants to look-up and read the following verses OR hand out scripture from the appendix.

- Proverbs 17:17
- Proverbs 27:17
- John 15:15
- Romans 15:7
- James 5:16
- Hebrews 3:13

After each scripture, **ask:** What does this scripture tell us about spirituality and/or friendship?

Optional: Write some of these answers on a large paper/whiteboard



Synchronous Online:

Same as In Person

Asynchronous Online:

Send scriptures to participants and invite them to read through them and think/journal about how the Scriptures influence their thoughts on spiritual friendships.

ACTIVITY (40 minutes)

In Person:

Explain: Point out the pictures set up around the edges of the room. Let participants know that you are going to ask them a question. Once they hear the question they will be invited to walk around and select ONE picture that represents how they *feel* and/or *think* about the question. Let participants know that they will be asked to explain why they chose the picture they did. Ask them to return to their spot in the circle/around the table once they have selected their picture.

Ask: if there are any questions

Ask: the first question (choose the question from the box in the “Set Up” section of this lesson plan, or one of your own making).

Invite: participants to choose their picture

(Once everyone has returned to their spot)

Say: As a reminder, everyone is going to have a chance to share about their picture. When it is your turn, describe the picture and tell us how it answers the question for you. While someone is sharing, we should all listen. Once someone is done sharing, we will wait 10 seconds to really hear what they said. After 10 seconds I'll ask if anyone would like to respond. This will be an opportunity to encourage, ask clarifying questions, or offer a scripture (if one comes to mind). Anything outside of that won't be necessary to say at this time. Remember, we are trying to get to know one another better.

- Note: The goal of this activity is to increase transparency in the group with structured vulnerability. Problem solving, accusations, and judgements should be disallowed during the activity.

Request: Tell us about your picture. . .

- Note: Participants can share in whatever order makes sense for your group: start on your left, go all the way around, let people volunteer, have the person who goes “tag” the next person. Just make sure to tell everyone what the system is.



Depending on the size of your group and the amount of time this first round takes, you can repeat the above steps again with a different question or move on to the debrief. If you are going to repeat the process, make sure to replace the pictures so they can be used in multiple rounds.

Pray: for the group, the time you've spent together, and the spiritual friendships that may bloom from this activity.

Synchronous Online:

Send: groups to breakout rooms (if needed)

- Note: make sure there is a leader available for each group and that they have all instructions

Explain: Point to the photo resource of your choice. Let participants know that you are going to ask them a question. Once they hear the question, they will be invited to select ONE picture that represents how they *feel* or *think* about the question. Let participants know that they will be asked to explain why they chose the picture they did. Ask them to indicate when they have selected their picture. Let participants know if they will be screen sharing their image, or putting a link to the image in the chat box.

Ask: if there are any questions

Ask: the first question: (choose the question from the box in the “Set Up” section of this lesson plan, or one of your own making).

Invite: participants to choose their picture

Say: As a reminder everyone is going to have a chance to share about their picture. When it is your turn, describe the picture and tell us how it answers the question for you. While someone is sharing, we should all listen. Once someone is done sharing, we will wait 10 seconds to really hear what they said. After 10 seconds I'll ask if anyone would like to respond. This will be an opportunity to encourage, ask clarifying questions, or offer a scripture (if one comes to mind). Anything outside of that won't be necessary to say at this time. Remember, we are trying to get to know one another better.

- Note: the goal of this activity is to increase transparency in the group with structured vulnerability. Problem solving, accusations, and judgements should be disallowed during the activity.

Request: Tell us about your picture. . .

- Note: Participants can share in whatever order makes sense for your group: start on your left, go all the way around, let people volunteer, have the person who goes “tag” the next person. Just make sure to tell everyone what the system is.



Depending on the size of your group, and the amount of time this first round takes you can repeat the above steps again with a different question or move on to the debrief.

Pray: for the group, the time you've spent together, and the spiritual friendships that may bloom from this activity.

Asynchronous Online:

Explanation/Prompt: Using one of the photo platforms, or images you find in your own home, consider the following question(s): ****INSERT QUESTION(S) OF CHOICE HERE**** Once you have chosen ONE picture that represents how you *feel* or *think* about the question spend some time in reflection. Consider writing down your thoughts and feelings in your journal. When able, try to have a conversation about your reflections with someone you consider a friend.

- Note: You can send the above prompt to your asynchronous participants, inserting the relevant questions. You can also let them know that they can do this several times, or with other questions (as is helpful for them).

DEBRIEF: (5-15 minutes)

In Person:

Once you have asked all the questions you wanted to for the activity. Debrief the time by asking some of the following:

- *What did you learn from the images and the process of talking about them?*
- *How was it helpful?*
- *What was surprising?*
- *What was commonly shared?*
- *What were the key differences?*
- *What if you used these insights as you addressed the problem or challenge?*
- *What will you do now?*

Pray for the group.

Synchronous Online:

Same as In Person.

Asynchronous Online:

Send the above questions to participants, consider following up with them via phone, email, or other means and ask them about their experience.



APPENDIX 1

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.

John 15:15

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Hebrews 13:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.



LESSON SAMPLE (FIFTEEN-MINUTE VERSION)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Answer questions about their spiritual lives
- Develop spiritual friendships that may lead to deeper accountability

MATERIALS NEEDED

In Person:

Necessary Materials

- Copy of Appendix 1 (for each participant) OR digital copy to display

Additional Materials

- TV, screen, projector (if desired)

Synchronous Online:

- Digital copy of Appendix 1 to display (via screen share, or sent in advance)

Asynchronous Online:

- Copy of Appendix 1 (for each participant) OR digital copy
- Journal/paper

SET UP

In Person:

- 1) Print out copies of Appendix 1 OR set up TV/Screen
- 2) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list (or make up your own):
 - What is your faith like?
 - How do you view God?
 - What do you need from a spiritual friend?
 - What do you need from this group?
 - How do you think God sees you?
 - What do you need to confess?



Synchronous Online:

1) Have digital copy of Appendix 1 ready to share (either via screen share, sent in advance, or linked in the chat)

2) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list (or make up your own):

- What is your faith like?
- How do you view God?
- What do you need from a spiritual friend?
- What do you need from this group?
- How do you think God sees you?
- What do you need to confess?

Asynchronous Online:

1) Send a hard copy or digital copy to participants

2) Decide on what question(s) you want to use from the following list (or make up your own):

- What is your faith like?
- How do you view God?
- What do you need from a spiritual friend?
- What do you need from this group?
- How do you think God sees you?

3) Remind participants to have their journal ready

PREAMBLE (1 minute)

Today we are going to practice talking about our personal spirituality. This is sometimes an awkward thing to do because we *don't do it regularly*, so it feels like it's something we shouldn't talk about. But that isn't true! In fact, some people develop deep friendships *because* they talk about their walk with Jesus openly, honestly, and frequently.

ACTIVITY (10-12 minutes)

In Person:

Hand out picture OR display it on your screen.

Say: In a moment I'm going to ask you a question, I'll give everyone a minute to think about who best represents them. Once a minute has passed we'll take turns sharing our thoughts.

Ask: the question you've chosen (from the list provided, or one of your own)

Wait: a minute



Request: Tell us about who you are in the picture. . .

- Note: Participants can share in whatever order makes sense for your group: start on your left, go all the way around, let people volunteer, have the person who goes “tag” the next person. Just make sure to tell everyone what the system is.

Synchronous Online:

Same as in person, except you will not be in the same physical space.

Asynchronous Online:

Send the image, question and instructions to asynchronous participants. Invite them to journal their thoughts and feelings about the answer to the question. Encourage them to try to have a conversation about their reflections with someone.

DEBRIEF (3-5 minutes)

In Person:

Once everyone has answered the question, debrief the time by asking some of the following:

- *What did you learn from the images and the process of talking about them?*
- *How was it helpful?*
- *What was surprising?*
- *What was commonly shared?*
- *What were the key differences?*
- *What if you used these insights as you addressed the problem or challenge?*
- *What will you do now?*

Pray for the group.

Synchronous Online:

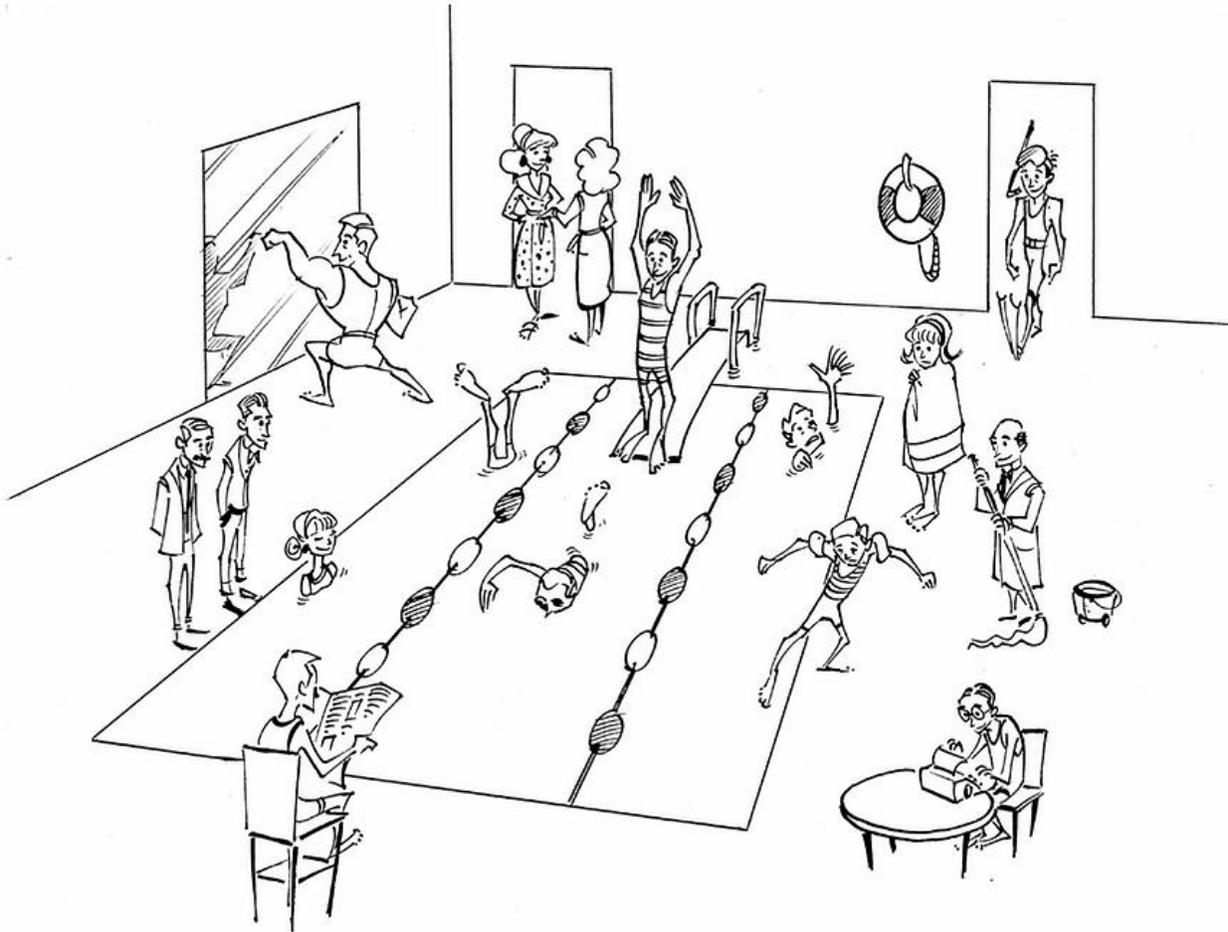
Same as In Person.

Asynchronous Online:

Send the above questions to participants, consider following up with them via phone, email, or other means and ask them about their experience.



APPENDIX 1: The Alpha Pool



Used with permission by Alpha Canada.

Visit <https://alphacanada.org/> for more resourcing.

RESOURCES

Resources

VIDEOS

[Spiritual Disciplines \(Confession\)](#)¹

[Foundations: The Discipline of Confession](#)

ARTICLES

[Confession: a Practical Guide](#)

[Spiritual Disciplines-Confession](#)

[The Sustaining Bread of Self Knowledge](#)

[Taking Sin—and Grace-- Seriously](#)

[Becoming Like Christ](#)

[Understanding Confession](#)

[Friendship as a Spiritual Discipline](#)

[Using Self-Examination for Spiritual Formation](#)

You can also check out our Tech Page, for resources and best practices on running your youth group virtually: <https://cboqyouth.ca/tech/>



¹ This is a sermon from a Canadian Baptist church in Saskatchewan.

BOOKS ON CONFESSION

Hahn, Scott. *Lord, Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession.*

Konyndyk DeYoung, Rebecca. *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies*

BOOKS ON SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

Jones, Timothy. *Finding a Spiritual Friend.*

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Life Together in Christ: Experiencing Transformation in Community.*

Crabb, Larry. *Soultalk.*

Caliguire, Mindy. *Spiritual Friendship.*

GENERAL BOOKS ON SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

Ahlberg-Calhoun, Adele. *The Spiritual Practices Handbook.*

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Sacred Rhythms*

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline.*

Shiflett, Diana. *Spiritual Practices in Community.*

Smith, Traci. *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home.*

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast.*

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines.*



Confession

Reflection Questions

1. Does your confession tend to be along the lines of “Forgive my sins, dear Lord” rather than specifically naming your sins one by one before the face of God? What does the lack of specific confession do to your self-awareness?
2. What experiences have affected your ability to give and receive forgiveness? Talk to God about what this means.
3. When have you tasted the joy of forgiveness? What was that like for you?
4. What is it like for you to confess your sins before a friend or confessor?
5. Which of your sins hurts those closest to you?

Spiritual Exercises

1. Imagine you are in a safe place, surrounded by the love of God.
 - a. Ask God to help you see yourself as he sees you. Remember he sees you absolutely and with love.
 - b. Using the Ten Commandments as a guide, journal your sins. When you have finished, go through each commandment one at a time, asking God to forgive you and help you to change.
 - c. Then burn your list in a symbolic act of what it means to have God remove your sins from you.
2. Set aside some time for confession and self-examination. In the presence of God ask for light to pierce your defenses.
 - a. Then ask yourself, *Who have I injured recently through thoughtlessness, neglect, anger and so on?*
 - b. As the Holy Spirit brings people to mind, confess your feelings about these people to God. Ask God to forgive you and, if need be, to give you grace to forgive them.
 - c. Write an apology, make a phone call, or confess out loud in an attempt to put the relationship back on track.
3. Make a life confession (alone or to a trusted friend or confessor).
 - a. Dividing your life into seven-year segments, reflect on the sins particular to each segment.
 - b. Confess your sins aloud. Receive the freedom that comes in knowing you stand completely in the clear before a holy God.

4. Ask some of your family and close friends to help you see your blind spots. Ask questions like, “What do I do that hurts you? How could I better love you? What is it like to be with me? Do I show interest in others or talk mostly about myself?” Let their answers guide you in a time of confession.
5. Enter into a covenant group or an accountability relationship where you cannot hide. Tell the truth about who you are and ask your partners to pray for you and help you change.
6. Imagine the kind of person you would like to become in your old age.
 - a. Then look at your life and assess whether or not the way you live now is preparing you to become this person.
 - b. Confess where you need to change. Ask God and the community of faith for help.
7. How in touch do you feel with your own sin?
 - a. If you feel out of touch with your sin, honestly consider where some of the following sins show up in your life: envy, lust, greed, gluttony, deceit, lying, exaggerating, envy, anger, pretense, avoidance of responsibility.
 - b. What do you see about yourself? How do you want to talk to God about these things?
 - c. Confess where you have fallen short of God’s expectations and receive his forgiveness.
8. Begin to notice your strong emotions. When do you feel yourself getting hot, defensive, angry, withdrawn? What is motivating your emotion? What behavior stems from your emotion?
 - a. As you attend to this internal world, ask God to make you alert to what triggers strong emotional reactions. Confess any sin relating to these reactions.
 - b. Practice noticing your internal world and begin to develop a habit of immediate confession.

Adapted from: Adele Ahlberg-Calhoun's *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, page 101.



EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR YOUTH

Youth can use the Ten Commandments to help them clarify the places where they may have sinned. These self-examination questions may help youth to be specific in confessions.

I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.

Do I care more about friends and games than talking to God? Do I try to be like Jesus and the Saints?

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Do I use the God's name carelessly? Do I use the name of Jesus in anger?

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Did I attend church on Sunday? Have I remembered to pray daily?

Honor your father and your mother.

Do I obey my parents? Have I done my chores without complaining or being reminded? Have I been disrespectful to teachers?

You shall not kill.

Do I get angry too easily and react in ways I regret? Do I hold grudges and try to get even with others? Am I caring to others, including those who seem different than me? Am I kind?

You shall not commit adultery.

Do I show respect for my body and the bodies of others? Do I avoid harmful things like drugs, cigarettes and alcohol?

You shall not steal.

Have I taken something that belongs to someone else? Have I used my money responsibly? Have I used others irresponsibly?

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

Do I ever cheat at games or in my schoolwork? Have I lied? Do I gossip or talk behind peoples' backs?

You shall not covet your neighbour's spouse.

Am I jealous of other peoples' friends or status? Is being popular more important to me than following God?

You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

Have I been jealous of the things that my friends have? Have I nagged my parents into buying things I don't really need? Am I generous with my time and possessions?

Adapted from: <https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/media/offices--ministries/sub-sites/day-of-confessions/guide-youth-en-2016.pdf>



Confession

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” – James 5:16

Confession is the practice of letting other safe and trusted people know our deepest weaknesses and failures. One of the best ways to receive nurture and grace from others is through the practice of confession. There is also no more effective way to deal with sin in our lives. Over the centuries, confession somehow became a practice between an individual and God. But in the Bible, confession is both a practice between an individual and God (1 John 1:9) and between an individual and other supportive believers (James 5:16 is one example).

A huge part of confession is forgiveness. Richard Foster has said, “It is God who does the forgiving, but often He chooses human beings as the channel of His forgiving grace.”ⁱ It is important to understand confession as a process. Since forgiveness is a process and almost always takes a significant amount of time, the practice of confession becomes an integral part of this process. There is nothing more healing for sin than bringing it into the light. The best way to bring sin into the light is through confession.

It is also very important to be sure that confession is practiced in an atmosphere of safety and grace. If confession is done with people who are judgmental, critical, or attempt to “fix” you as a person, it will only exacerbate the problem. So prior to spending time in confession, be sure the other people involved are as committed to giving grace, love, and forgiveness as you are.

1. Read and meditate on 1 John 1:9. Choose an area of sin that you need to tell God about. As you share it with him, picture God’s face full of compassion and love. Allow yourself to feel and experience God’s grace and forgiveness of this area.
2. Choose a friend who knows you better than anyone else. If you have never discussed confession together, spend some time exploring how the two of you might benefit from sharing the deepest parts of yourself. If you have mutual agreement about sharing issues of struggle and sin, share an area of your life that has been in the darkness and needs to be brought into the light. Allow yourself to feel your friend’s acceptance and grace. Spend some time praying for each other with what you have shared.
3. If you are part of a small group that is very safe, consider how you might practice confession in the context of community. If you are not part of a small group, consider sharing with your Journey Community an area of your life that would benefit from the practice of confession.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Richard J. Foster’s Study Guide For Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983), 59.



Confession and Self-Examination

Desire	To surrender my weaknesses and faults to the forgiving love of Christ and intentionally desire and embrace practices that lead to transformation.
Definition	Self-examinations is a process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my heart to what is true about me. This is not the same thing as a neurotic, shame-inducing inventory. Instead, it is a way of opening myself to God within the safety of divine love so I can authentically seek transformation. Confession embraces Christ's love of forgiveness and restoration while setting us on the path to renewal and change.
Scripture	<p>Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)</p> <p>Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1-2)</p> <p>Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)</p>
Practice Includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admitting to God the natural propensity to rationalize, deny, blame and self-obsess • Examining the “sin network” in your life as evidenced in presumptuous sins, besetting weakness, self-centered habits, and broken relationships • Replacing sinful habits with healthy ones • Seeking God's grace to change • Confessing sins by examining your life in the light of (1) the seven deadly sins, (2) the Ten Commandments, (3) prayers of confession found in prayer books of Scripture (Psalm 51), and (4) a life of confession, journaling confessions to God and confessions to others
God-Given Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping company with Jesus as he helps you with how much or how little you change • Being transformed into Christlikeness • Thinking of yourself with sober judgement, awareness of your blind spots • Gaining insight into your temptations and God's work in your life • Having compassion toward others in their faults • Seeing yourself as God's loved and forgiven child no matter what you have done • Living in thankfulness for God's work in your life • Savouring the gift of salvation

Adapted from: *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, Adele Ahlberg-Calhoun.



Examen

Desire	To reflect on where I was most and least present to God's love in my day
Definition	The examen is a practice for discerning the voice and activity of God within the flow of the day. It is a vehicle that creates deeper awareness of God-given desires in one's life
Scripture	<p>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9)</p> <p>And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11)</p>
Practice Includes	<p>A regular time of coming into the presence of God to ask 2 questions (variations are below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For what moment today am I most grateful? For what moment today am I least grateful? • When did I give and receive the most love today? When did I give and receive the least love today? • What was the most life-giving part of my day? What was the most life-thwarting part of my day? • Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit? Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit? • When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself? When today did I have the least sense of connection?
God-Given Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping company with Jesus throughout all the highs and lows of the day • Recognizing God's presence in your experiences • Developing more discernment and receptivity to God's voice • Freedom from "acting the guru"; pointing others toward listening to God, not to me • Fostering gratitude • Being aware of your growing edges • Being aware of God-given desires • Being aware of invitations to prayer that God presents to you throughout the day

Adapted from: *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, Adele Ahlberg-Calhoun.

Spiritual Friendship

Desire	To develop a friendship that encourages and challenges me to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength
Definition	Spiritual friendship involves cultivating a covenant friendship where I can naturally share about my life with God. It is grounded in relationship to God and a commitment to support, encourage, and pray for one another.
Scripture	<p>A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)</p> <p>Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)</p> <p>Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)</p> <p>As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)</p>
Practice Includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journeying with another so you mutually grow in faith, hope, and love • Covenanting to pray for and receive one another in love • Playing together and praying together • Knowing another well enough to be a support, encouragement, and word of God to them • Developing a healthy, interdependent friendship that encourages and grows the soul • Inviting a friend into the journey of recognizing your blind spots
God-Given Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining the perspective and support of a trusted Christian friend • Being open about your highs, lows, temptations, and joys • Experiencing God's love through the love of a friend • Appreciating and being thankful for the giftedness of your spiritual friend • Allowing a trusted friend to stretch and challenge you • Laying down your life for love of another • Having more than allies, colleagues and acquaintances in your journey

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