



## CONFESSION: A Quick How-To.

First, take a deep breath ... it's easier than you think.

### Step 1

Examine your conscience. Look at your life. See where you've made some mistakes. Ask, "How have I offended God and others? How can I make up for it?"

### Step 2

Muster up courage to amend your life. Find a priest who will hear your confession.

Start off by saying, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was (indicate how long ago). "My sins are... (Start with the most serious ones, and how often you do them. Then tell your less serious sins.)

Listen to the priest's advice. Receive your penance (an outward act to show your repentance for having done wrong.)

Say an act of contrition (a vocal prayer to God declaring your sorrow for your sins, your plea for forgiveness, your promise to do penance and be a better person.)

Receive absolution (the priest's blessing by which your sins disappear, forgiven by God.)

### Step 3

Do your penance and start to live a better life. Enjoy the peace that comes with God's forgiveness.

## COMMON CONCERNS

**Q. What if I'm embarrassed because I don't know how to prepare or what to do in Confession?**

No problem. Feel free to ask the priest to guide you through the sacrament. He's there to serve you.

**Q. I've done some awful things. Won't I shock the priest with what I say?**

Remember that priests have heard thousands of confessions over the years, and there are really no new sins. It's a great privilege for priests to hear confessions and be instruments of the Father's mercy.

**Q. Can a priest later repeat something he heard in Confession?**

Under no circumstances. The Church considers the honouring and protection of the penitent's privacy a sacred duty of the priest. Indeed, were a priest to violate "the seal of confession," he would be automatically excommunicated from the Church.

**Q. I'm divorced and remarried outside the Church. Can I still go to Confession?**

Every one of us in the Church is a sinner, and everyone is welcome regardless of our past or present situation. The confessional is a safe place to identify your concerns to a priest and receive non-judgmental advice about possible next steps.



The Catholic  
Archdiocese  
of Edmonton