

# Leader Guide for Study 3: Confession of Sin

## Introduction

This week we will discuss the Confession of Sin portion of liturgy, which is a time for the congregation to collectively admit to and repent of our sin, and ask for God's forgiveness made possible by the sacrifice of His Son Jesus.

In the order of liturgy, Confession of Sin occurs after **Affirmation of Faith**, when we specifically affirm what we believe, and before **Pardoned**, when we are reminded of God's faithful forgiveness of our sins. **Confession of Sin** and **Pardoned** go hand-in-hand, and therefore sometimes appear to be one section in the liturgy.

Confession of Sin is led by one of the Elders or Pastors and involves a predefined confession prayer for the leader and congregants to read together.

## What does it mean?

### Discussion:

1. What examples of confession in the public sphere (e.g. politics, sports) can you think of? What does our culture today (e.g. movies, TV, news) think of confession?

### Read the following passages:

- I John 1:9
- Psalm 51:4
- Psalm 139:23-24
- Isaiah 53:5

### Discussion:

1. What perspective does our culture today have about sin?
2. Have you experienced group confession at a church before coming to Canyon Creek? If so, how was that experience different?

## Why do we practice it?

Even though Confession of Sin is counter-cultural, we practice confession as a group on a regular cadence since it is commanded in the Bible and has proven to be beneficial to our spiritual growth.

### Read the following passages:

- I John 1:9

- James 5:16
- Nehemiah 9:3, 16-17, 26-35

**Discussion:**

1. What are the attributes of the confession described in each passage. What is similar / different about confession described in each passage?
2. What are some of the benefits of confession described in the passages?
3. Why do you think God's people collectively confessed sin in Nehemiah 9?

**How do we practice it?**

Here is an example of a Confession of Sin that could be used in a church service:

You asked for my hands, that you might use them for your purpose.  
 I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them, for the work was hard.  
 You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice,  
 I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.  
 You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.  
 I closed them, for I did not want to see.  
 You asked for my life, that you might work through me.  
 I gave a small part, that i might not get too involved.  
 Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you--  
 only when it is convenient to do so,  
 only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
 and only with those who make it easy to do so.  
 Father, forgive me, renew me, send me out as a usable instrument,  
 that I might take seriously the meaning of your cross. Amen.  
*(a contemporary Confession of Sin from the Worship Sourcebook #35)*

**Discussion:**

- 1) When has Confession of Sin not been beneficial for you?
- 2) What about Confession of Sin during church makes you uncomfortable?
- 3) What emotions do you feel during Confession of Sin?
- 4) How does this practice help you confess throughout the week?

**Conclusion**

Confession of Sin is a time when we can come together as a congregation and focus on where we have fallen short of God's design for our lives and our community. Confession is commanded in scripture, and is beneficial for us as it increases our awareness of sin, leads to restoration, and stimulates gratefulness in our hearts.

**Discussion:**

1. How should we respond to what we have learned today?