

A Modern Ashamnu (Confession)

Contributed by [Custom & Craft](#)

Source: Alison Laichter, from "Time To Reflect: A High Holidays-Inspired Workbook"

The traditional confessional prayer, the *Vidui*, is composed of two parts, the *Ashamnu* and the *Al Chet*, that we read aloud on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. The *Ashamnu* (translated as "we have trespassed" or "we are guilty") is an abbreviated confession, an alphabetic acrostic, and written in first person plural. We recite this confessional in the plural to represent our shared responsibility and culpability in all of our lives and missteps. We also share this confessional as a reminder that forgiveness is also shared.

Use the modern interpretation of the *Ashamnu* below using the English alphabet and add in your missteps for each letter of the alphabet:

We have behaved arrogantly,

We have betrayed ourselves and our families,

We have acted out of contempt,

We have been dishonest,

We have erred out of ignorance,

We have forgotten who we are,

We have gossiped,

We have been hypocritical,

We have been insensitive,

We have justified bad decisions,

We have killed our impulse to do good,

We have looked the other way,

We have been mean,

We have been neglectful,

We have acted out of fear instead of love,

We have pushed too much,

We have been quiet when we should have spoken up,

We have been rageful,

We have stolen,

We have tried to teach when we should have tried to learn,

We have been untrue,

We have behaved violently,

We have withheld that which could have been given freely,

We have held others to unrealistic expectations,

We have yielded instead of moving forward,

We have zoomed too narrowly into challenges,