

Religious Leader

Lead a congregation: worship, weddings, funerals, counselling and a community that calls you at midnight.

TYPICAL PAY

\$57,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$36k to \$92k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Churches, mosques, synagogues,
temples, hospitals, campuses**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Get involved in your own community: youth leadership, teaching, music, volunteering.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any subject in most traditions. Philosophy, history, languages and social sciences are common.
- 3 Discernment or candidacy** 1 to 3 years
A formal process where your community and your denomination test whether you are suited to lead. It runs alongside school and can take years.
- 4 Theological school** 2 to 4 years
Typically an MDiv (Master of Divinity) at a seminary or a divinity school, or the equivalent training in your own tradition.
- 5 Supervised ministry, then ordination** 1 to 2 years
A paid internship or placement, then ordination, commissioning or appointment by your denomination.

Pros and cons

- + You are present at the biggest moments of people's lives
- + Deep community, rarely lonely in the working sense
- + Housing support and a pension in established denominations
- You are on call for grief and crisis at any hour
- Congregations are shrinking in much of Canada, so jobs are fewer
- Your household lives in public and is judged

Optional boosts

Chaplaincy. Counselling training. Youth and family ministry. Teaching.

Good to know

A third of Canada reports no religion

In the 2021 Census, about 12.6 million people, or 34.6% of the population, reported no religious affiliation. That is more than double the share in 2001, and it is why congregation jobs are getting scarcer.

Some faiths are growing fast

The same census counted about 1.8 million Muslims, 830,000 Hindus and 770,000 Sikhs in Canada, each roughly doubling as a share of the population since 2001. Demand for leaders in those communities is rising.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Minister, wages (updated Nov 2025)

The United Church of Canada: entering ministry

Statistics Canada: Religion in Canada, 2021 Census

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/religious-leader>



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