



Religion Week

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Comparison of World Religions

	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
Followers Worldwide (estimated 2001 figures)	362 million	2 billion	820 million	1.2 billion	14.5 million	6.3 million
Name of Deity	The Buddha did not teach a personal deity.	God	Three main gods: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva	God (Allah)	God (Yahweh)	Confucius (viewed by many as a god)
Founder	The Buddha	Jesus Christ	No one founder	Muhammad	Abraham	Confucius
Holy Book	No one book—sacred texts, including the <i>Dhammapada</i>	Bible	No one book—sacred texts, including the Vedas, the Puranas	Qur'an	Hebrew Bible, including the Torah	the <i>Analects</i> , the Five Classics
Leadership	Buddhist monks and nuns	Priests, ministers, monks, and nuns	Guru, holy man, Brahmin priest	No clergy but a scholar class called the ulama and the imam, who may lead prayers	Rabbis	No clergy
Basic Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons achieve complete peace and happiness (nirvana) by eliminating their attachment to worldly things. Nirvana is reached by following the Noble Eightfold Path: Right views; Right resolve; Right speech; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right effort; Right mindfulness; Right concentration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people. Jesus Christ was the son of God. He died to save humanity from sin. His death and resurrection made eternal life possible for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The soul never dies, but is continually reborn. Persons achieve happiness and enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires. Freedom from earthly desires comes from a lifetime of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons achieve salvation by following the Five Pillars of Islam and living a just life. These pillars are: faith; prayer; almsgiving, or charity to the poor; fasting, which Muslims perform during Ramadan; pilgrimage to Mecca. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people. God loves and protects his people, but also holds people accountable for their sins and shortcomings. Persons serve God by studying the Torah and living by its teachings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on strong family relationships. Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society. Education is important both to the welfare of the individual and to society.

Facts about World Religions

QUICK FACTS

1. Christianity is the largest religion in the world, with more than 2.4 billion followers.
2. An estimated 1.2 billion people around the world do not follow any religion.
3. Rastafari is the smallest religion, with 600,000 followers.
4. Islam is the second-largest religion in the world, with 1.9 billion followers.
5. Neo-Paganism has 1 million followers.

INTERESTING FACTS

1. Archaeological evidence of religion goes back to the Old Stone Age.
2. Göbekli Tepe in Turkey is the oldest religious site in the world, built in the New Stone Age.
3. The Pyramid Texts of Egypt are the oldest religious texts in the world, going back to 2400 BC.
4. The oldest of the Upanishads, Hinduism's sacred texts, go back to the first millennium BC.
5. The complete Hebrew texts were in circulation by the 1st century AD.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

1. Most major religions today date their founding to the centuries between 900 to 200 BC.
2. Christianity dominated Europe in the Middle Ages.
3. Islam spread across the Middle East and parts of Asia and Africa in the Middle Ages.
4. Buddhism declined in India but spread in East Asia in the Middle Ages.
5. Colonization spread Christianity to the Americas, Australasia, and part of Africa.
6. The invention of the printing press helped start the Protestant Reformation.
7. The French Revolution weakened religion by starting the secularization of society.
8. The Industrial Revolution further accelerated the process of secularization.
9. Religious influence worldwide faded by the late-20th century.
10. The internet has become a way to spread and practice religion from the start of the 21st century.

When Is World Religion Day?

It is celebrated every January on the third Sunday of the month.

How It Began

World Religion Day started in the USA, 1950.
The Bahá'í faith started World Religion Day.

The Six Main Religions

The six main religions are:

Christianity		Islam	
Buddhism		Judaism	
Hinduism		Sikhism	

- show respect to other religions;
- treat each other with understanding;
- try to make the world a better place for everyone.

How It Began

World Religion Day was started by people who followed the Bahá'í faith, in the USA, 1950.

It was decided that one day a year, all religions should be celebrated.

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The Lord's Prayer

T A R D S Y D K H D
 E E O E R I I X A K
 V T M O H N M E L R
 I E L P G T R S L E
 L G J D T B A X O W
 B Q O O Y A V F W O
 R M Q L Q I T M E P
 E V I G R O F I D Q
 X A X W I L L K O G
 D L J G F H B A J N

FATHER
 HALLOWED
 KINGDOM
 WILL

DAILY BREAD
 FORGIVE
 SINS
 TEMPTATION

EVIL
 GLORY
 POWER

World Religion Day – unicef Articles

World Religion Day is celebrated to:

- Show respect to other religions
- Treat each other with understanding
- Try and make the world a better place for everyone

As children, we have the right to think and believe what we choose and practice a religion.

ARTICLES FOR WORLD RELIGION DAY

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 14 (freedom of thought belief and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

