

## R-1 What Is Religion?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Religion is not easy to define. For many people, religion is an organized form of worship that takes place in a temple, church, synagogue or mosque. For others, religion is personal, practice in a private way. Religion depends upon people's beliefs that one or more gods exist. A god is a being or spirit more capable and powerful than human beings.

There are people who believe in only one god. There are people who don't believe in any god, and there are people who believe in many gods. With so many different views, it's no wonder that people have been debating the meaning of the word "religion" for centuries.

One thing we know for certain-religion has been around since the dawn of mankind. In the Stone Age, people prayed to the spirits of nature. They asked for simple things such as rain or a good hunt. Later, people moved from nature worship to idol worship. Idols were statues that represented the gods. Ancient people believed they could influence the gods by offering gifts to their idols. In time, many people rejected idol worship and new religions were formed.

The root of today's major religions- Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shinto go back thousands of years. Although they differ from each other in many ways, the major religions have some things in common. The major religions all offer answers to the questions such as, "What is the meaning of life?" or "Is there life after death?" All of the major religions teach their believers that life has a purpose. Most religions promise that when death comes, good people will be rewarded and bad people will be punished.

Another thing most major religions have in common is a belief in some kind of higher, divine (godlike) power. Monotheistic religions believe there is only one god. Polytheistic religions believe in more than one god. Religions have rituals to honor, appeal to or serve their god or gods. Rituals include such things as services, prayers, wedding and funerals. Every major religion has a code of conduct. This is basically a set of rules to live by. These rules tell people how to act towards each other and how to act towards their god or gods. Sometimes, these rules even explain things such as what to eat and whom to marry. These things are often written in sacred books and told in ancient stories.

List 5 characteristics of religions

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### How is religious liberty legally protected in the United States?









The **U.S. Constitution (the Bill of Rights)** protects the freedom of religion, allowing people with different beliefs to live peaceably together. **The First Amendment** guarantees freedoms of religion, speech, assembly (getting together), and the right to petition our government (complain to or ask for assistance). It forbids Congress from both promoting one religion over others and also restricting an individual's religious practices. The first 16 words of the **First Amendment** have two protections for religion. The prohibition on an **establishment** of religion keeps the government from helping or harming any religion. The protection of **free exercise** keeps the government from unnecessarily interfering with religious practice.

The First Amendment keeps government neutral — neither helping nor hurting religion, but allowing people to practice their religion. Additional protections exist in various federal, state and local laws.

What protects the freedom of religion in the US? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the 2 ways religion is protected in the US? \_\_\_\_\_

## THE GOLDEN RULE AND THE WORLD'S TOP TRENDING RELIGIONS®

 <p><b>African Traditional &amp; Diasporic Faiths*</b></p> <p><i>No one should bite the other. What you do not find acceptable if it were done to you by another, do not do to him or her.</i>  <b>Akan &amp; Adinkra Tribes of West Africa</b></p>	 <p><b>Baha'i Faith</b></p> <p><i>Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you do not desire for yourself.</i>  <b>Baha'u'llah, Gleanings</b></p>	 <p><b>Buddhism</b></p> <p><i>Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.</i>  <b>Udana-Varga 5:18</b></p>	 <p><b>Christianity</b></p> <p><i>In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.</i>  <b>Jesus, Matthew 7:12</b></p>
 <p><b>Confucianism</b></p> <p><i>One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.</i>  <b>Confucius, Analects 15:23</b></p>	 <p><b>Hinduism</b></p> <p><i>This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.</i>  <b>Mahabharata 5:1517</b></p>	 <p><b>Islam</b></p> <p><i>"None of you have faith until you love for your neighbor what you love for yourself"</i>  <b>Sahih Muslim</b></p>	 <p><b>Jainism</b></p> <p><i>One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.</i>  <b>Mahavira, Sutraniitanga</b></p>
 <p><b>Judaism</b></p> <p><i>What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah all the rest is commentary.</i>  <b>Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a</b></p>	 <p><b>Native Spirituality</b></p> <p><i>All things are our relatives; what we do to everything, we do to ourselves. All is really One.</i>  <b>Black Elk</b></p>	 <p><b>Shinto</b></p> <p><i>The heart of the person before you is a mirror. See there your own form.</i>  <b>Munetada Kurozum</b></p>	 <p><b>Sikhism</b></p> <p><i>I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.</i>  <b>Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299</b></p>
 <p><b>Spiritism</b></p> <p><i>Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you do ye also unto them.</i>  <b>National Association of Spiritualist Churches</b></p>	 <p><b>Taoism</b></p> <p><i>Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.</i>  <b>T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218</b></p>	 <p><b>Unitarianism</b></p> <p><i>7<sup>th</sup> We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.</i>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> Principle Unitarian Universalist Assoc.</b></p>	 <p><b>Zoroastrianism</b></p> <p><i>Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.</i>  <b>Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29</b></p>

\*Nonreligious (Secular/Agnostic/Atheist), Primal-indigenous, and other African Traditional & Diaspora groups also believe in some form of the Golden Rule.