

Interfaith Ally Training

Definitions

Religious Tradition – Belief in a major tradition of the world (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.)

Spirituality – Relationship we have with something greater than ourselves

Spiritually Seeking – Those who don't identify with a particular faith (or non-faith) tradition, but are interested in learning more about other faiths and their own sense of spirituality

Buddhism – A religion founded on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, better known as the Buddha, which focuses on attaining enlightenment

Christianity – A monotheistic religion whose followers believe that Jesus was the Son of God and the Bible is their sacred scripture.

Hinduism – A monotheistic religion involving a wide range of practices and philosophies that involves the concept of karma, darma, and atman and emanating from the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita.

Islam – A monotheistic religion based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which are articulated in the Qur'an

Judaism – A monotheistic religion whose sacred text is the Torah, which consists of the first five books of the Bible

Roman Catholicism – A monotheistic religion, which recognizes the Pope as the leader of the faith and whose followers believe that Jesus was the Son of God and died to absolve their sins

Secular Humanism – A life stance based on the understanding that humans are not inherently good or evil, but that morality stems from a philosophy of utilitarianism, not from a god/higher power.

Sikhism – A monotheistic religion based on the teachings of a series of gurus



Some Resources

On Campus

Campus Ministry – Damen Student Center, 2nd floor

www.luc.edu/campusministry

www.luc.edu/interfaith

Agape/Ecclesia - <https://orgsync.com/13622/chapter>

Catholic Student Organization - <https://orgsync.com/32484/chapter>

Hillel (Jewish Student Organization) - <https://orgsync.com/13671/chapter>

Hindu Student Organization - <https://orgsync.com/13673/chapter>

Muslim Student Organization - <https://orgsync.com/13768/chapter>

Chicago Area

Interfaith Youth Corps (IFYC)

325 N. LaSalle St., Suite 775

Chicago, IL 60654

Phone: (312) 573-8825

www.ifyc.org

Council for a Parliament of the World Religions

70 East Lake Street, Suite 205

Chicago, Illinois 60601 U.S.A.

Telephone: 312.629.2990

<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org>

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) – Illinois Chapter

28 East Jackson Blvd., Suite 1700

Chicago, IL 60604

Tel 312.212.1520

<http://chicago.cair.com>

Other Online Websites

Jewish Religious Tradition

www.myjewishlearning.com

Evangelical Christian Information:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/>

Mainline Protestant Information

<http://www.thecommongood.org/>

<http://www.christiancentury.org/>

Christians on Faith, Culture, and Intentional Living

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/>

www.patheos.com

Basic Religion Information

<http://www.religionfacts.com/>

Sikhism

<http://sikhtalk.com/>

Religion Practical Facts:

1. Some Basic Tenets of Faith:

- a. **Judaism:** Belief in one G-d, G-d created a Covenant with the Jewish people and this Covenant is upheld through living out the Torah, and the Book of Prophets is viewed as a source of moral teaching.
- b. **Islam:** Belief that God (Allah) is One, and the Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Five pillars/practices of faith: declaration of faith (statement above), prayer, giving to charity, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and performing the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) if one is able.
- c. **Christianity:** Belief that Jesus was the Son of God, who died to absolve humanity of their sins, and the Bible is inspired by the word of God. For Roman Catholicism, the Pope is recognized as the leader of faith.
- d. **Hinduism:** God is one source, with numerous manifestations. Prominent themes include Dharma (ethics and duties), Samsara (the continuous cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth), Karma (action and subsequent reaction), Moksha (liberation from reincarnation or Samsara), and Yogas (various paths of thought and/or ritualistic practices).
- e. **Buddhism:** Buddhists must pledge to live life in accordance with (i.e., take refuge in) the Three Jewels: the Buddha (historical figure of the spiritual potential in all beings), the Dharma (teachings of the Buddha and the path to Enlightenment), and the Sangha (the community of those who have already attained Enlightenment, as well as the Buddhist community at large).
- f. **Sikhism:** Belief that God (Waheguru) is One (*Ek onkar*). Meditation (naam japna), earning an honest living (kirat karni), and sharing wealth with the community (vand chhakna). Every individual must be a saint soldier (saint → spiritual discipline; soldier → ready to fight oppression)

2. Sacred Spaces

- a. **Judaism:** synagogues, temples
 - i. Protocol as a guest: dress modestly, separate seating for men and women sometimes.
- b. **Islam:** mosques, masjids, musallahs
 - i. Protocol as a guest: take off shoes, cover head, dress modestly, separate seating for men and women.
- c. **Hinduism:** Temples, mandirs, puja rooms
 - i. Protocol as a guest: take off shoes.
- d. **Christianity:** churches, chapels
 - i. Protocol as a guest: depending on tradition, may have to cover head.
- e. **Buddhism:** meditation and reflection can be done anywhere, but Buddhists can visit temples and monasteries to pray as well.
 - i. Protocol as a guest: be respectful!
- f. **Sikhism:** gurdwara
 - i. Protocol as guest: stay quiet, be respectful

3. Food Customs

- a. **Judaism:** Kosher laws- detailed, come from Torah. Basic focus: no pork, shellfish or the mixing of milk and meat may be consumed. Milk and meat may be eaten; separate utensils, plates and containers must be used. Jewish families that keep kosher sometimes have 2 kitchens.
- b. **Islam:** No pork, no alcohol, no intoxicating foods. All other meats allowed (or Halal), but some Muslims prefer to eat the meat of animals slaughtered via Zabiha method (very similar to Kosher).
- c. **Hinduism:** Many Hindus are vegetarian: religious focus on being in right relation to world. Food is categorized as sattvic (pure food, such as fruits, vegetables, and milk), rajasic food (heavy, dark food, such as meats, spices, and fried foods), and tamasic food (lethargic, slow food, such as alcoholic beverages). Cows and other animals are held sacred, and generally not slaughtered.
- d. **Christianity:** Some Roman Catholic Christians observe the practice of not eating meat on Fridays, especially during Lent.
- e. **Buddhism:** Buddhism stresses self-awareness and virtuous behavior, and as such, several of the precepts taught by Buddhist teachers in order for devotees to develop better lifestyles include refraining from taking life (manifesting itself in vegetarianism in some cases), refraining from intoxicants, and refraining from eating at certain times (noon to sunrise).
- f. **Sikhism:** No food killed in a ritualistic manner (for example no Kosher or Zabiha prepared food).

4. Prayer and Worship

- a. **Judaism:** Shabbat is done on Friday nights, starts at sunset till Saturday at sunset. Most Jews will gather in synagogues or temples for this communal worship. Orthodox services are in Hebrew while other movements have a mixture of English and Hebrew. Men generally cover their heads upon entering the prayer space.
- b. **Islam:** Five daily obligatory prayers with supplementary prayers. Prayer consists of a series of physical movements and positions along with recitations from the Holy Qur'an, and glorification of God. On Friday afternoons, most Muslims gather for Jummah prayer which includes a Khutbah, or speech on a topic in Islam, followed by prayer in congregation.
- c. **Christianity:** Many Christians pray on Sundays or Saturday evenings. Worship is often liturgical, using prayers and hymns and recitations from verses of sacred text.
- d. **Hinduism:** Many Hindus attend their local temples for worship. Also common for individuals to have prayer spaces (called Puja rooms) in their homes with shrines to the deities they worship. Prayers include chanting of mantras, and in some cases, yoga and meditation. Hindu students at Loyola pray in the evenings at Aarti prayer at 5pm in the Puja room.
- e. **Buddhism:** Buddhism stresses frequent personal reflection. Acts of devotion take numerous forms, including meditation, chanting, and even yoga.
- f. **Sikhism:** Individual prayer consists of meditation or reading hymns from Guru Granth Sahib. In a congregational prayer, priests, or individuals trained in traditional singing lead attendees in devotional song and hymns from the sacred text. Called kirtan.

5. Holidays

- a. **Hinduism:** holidays celebrate history of Hinduism and pantheon of gods
 - i. Navratri- 9 Day Festival of Spring, includes Garba dance
 - ii. Diwali- Festival of Lights
 - iii. Holi- Festival of colors
 - iv. Feast days for specific deities
- b. **Christianity:** holidays celebrate life of Christ
 - i. Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter
 - ii. Christmas
- c. **Islam:** holidays celebrate revelation of Qur'an and God's covenant with mankind
 - i. (follows lunar calendar)
 - ii. Eid al-Fitr (after Ramadan)
 - iii. Eid al-Adha (after Hajj)
 - iv. In some countries, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (S)
- d. **Judaism:** holidays celebrate or are in remembrance of events in Jewish history
 - i. (follows lunar calendar)
 - ii. Rosh Hashanah
 - iii. Yom Kippur
 - iv. Sukkot
 - v. Passover
- e. **Buddhism:**
 - i. Vesak: Buddha's birthday, celebrated on the first full moon day in may (fourth lunar month). Major festival.
 - ii. Magha Puja: celebrated by Buddhists in Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos in March.
 - iii. Bodhi Day: holiday that commemorates the day the historical Buddha achieved enlightenment.
- f. **Sikhism:**
 - i. Gurupurab – celebrates births and deaths of gurus
 - ii. Vaisakhi – April 13th or 14th, celebrates the first Khalsa, or initiation/baptism of individuals into Sikhism by the guru.

6. Gender Dynamics and Interactions

- a. **Islam:** Muslims are encouraged to dress modestly. Muslim women wear hijab in tradition of female followers of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is sign of commitment to one's faith. Men are encouraged to dress as the Prophet (pbuh) did. Physical contact across non-related members of opposite genders is discouraged; instead of handshakes, some Muslims place their hand on their heart and say salaam.
- b. **Judaism:** Extremely similar idea of modesty in some movements of Judaism. Orthodox Jewish traditions do not permit physical contact between opposite gender unless absolutely necessary. Orthodox Jews uphold modest dress: sheitel for women, yarmulke for men.
- c. **Hinduism:** Duality in the pantheon- Gods and Goddesses. Special fasts and important religious roles for women.
- d. **Catholicism:** Religious terminology can be gendered at times.
- e. **Sikhism:** Equality stressed – men and women may wear a turban (called a *pagh*), leading prayer services, etc.
- f. **Leaders of Worship:** Muslim imams and Catholic priests male, rabbis and Sikh religious leaders male or female.

TIMELINE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

