

# Spirituality, Religion and Faith Overview - Fact Sheet



## What is spirituality?

Spirituality is something that's talked about a lot but is often misunderstood, in simple terms it is more of an individual practice, and has to do with having a sense of peace and purpose. It also relates to the process of developing beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others, without any set spiritual values. The meaning of spirituality has developed and expanded over time, and various connotations can be found alongside each other, There is therefore no single, widely agreed definition of spirituality. However in healthcare the predominant concept of spiritual needs is a sense of meaning and purpose in life and seeing the patient as a person.

Life can be full of ups and downs, good times and bad. Many people see spirituality as a great way to seek comfort and peace in their life. It can often be practiced alongside things like yoga, meditation or prayer, which ultimately focus on stress relief and release of emotion. Spirituality can recognise that your role in life has a greater value than what you do every day. It can relieve you from dependence on material things and can help you to understand your life's greater purpose. Spirituality can also be used as a way of coping with change or uncertainty. More detailed information about spirituality can be found at [ReachOut.com](https://www.reachout.com)

## What is Religion?

Religion can be defined as a cultural system of designated behaviours and practices, morals, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual elements, in short a belief in a god or gods and the activities that are connected with this belief, such as praying or worshipping in a building such as a church or temple

More specifically a specific set of organised beliefs and practices, usually shared by a community or group, related to the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. Also defined as a pursuit or interest followed with great devotion, and a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. More detailed information about religion can be found at [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org);

## What's the difference between religion, and spirituality?

Maybe you've heard about spirituality but aren't really sure what it is. Well, it's different from religion, and you can practice it even if you're not religious. Many people think that spirituality and religion are the same thing, and so they bring their beliefs and prejudices about religion to discussions about spirituality. Though all religions emphasise spiritualism as being part of faith, you can be 'spiritual' without being religious or a member of an organised religion.

One way to understand the relationship between spirituality and religion is to imagine a game of football. The rules, referees, other players and the field markings help guide you as you play the game in a similar way that you may feel religion might guide you to find your spirituality. You may identify as being any combination of religious and spiritual, but being religious doesn't automatically make you spiritual, or vice versa. [ReachOut Australia](https://www.reachout.com)

## What is Faith?

Faith **may be** defined as a genuine belief and the sincere heart that humans might possess when they cannot see or touch something, People **may** feel that they are often in need of faith during times of hardship and refinement, and along with faith comes refinement. Complete trust, belief, conviction, credence, reliance, dependence or confidence in someone or something.

More specifically a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual religious practice and behaviour, as set out in the attached diagram, which provides a view of the general common multi-faith practice, around religious belief, and doctrine. More detailed information about faith can be found at [Crosswalk.com](https://www.crosswalk.com); [Gotquestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org); [Merriam-Webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com)

## MULTI-FAITH PRACTICES

Set out below are general guidelines of the main faith groups you are likely to encounter. Of course not everyone in a religion or denomination will share exactly the same beliefs and all groups will have their fundamentals and liberals. **The main principle however should always be to ask, if not sure**

	CHRISTIAN	JEWISH	MUSLIM	BUDDHIST	SIKH	HINDU	JEHOVAH'S WITNESS	MORMON	RASTAFARIAN
<b>Founded</b>	27AD	5000BC	622AD	563BC	1500AD	5000BC	1850AD	1840AD	1935
<b>Leaders</b>	Jesus Christ	Abraham	Mohammed	Siddhartha Guatama	Guru Nanak	The Aryans	Charles Russell	Joseph Smith	Leonard P Howell
<b>Diet</b>	No restrictions, but some may fast during Lent	Kosher only No pork	Halal meat only. No pork, no alcohol. Fast during Ramadan, but not if very ill, old/menstruating.	Vegetarian	Diet is up to the individual, though Halal and Kosher food are not permitted.	No beef	No restrictions	No stimulant, so no tea, coffee or alcohol	Vegetarian although some may eat fish but not shellfish. No alcohol or caffeinated drinks such as tea and coffee
<b>Holy Book</b>	The Bible	The Old Testament	The Quran	Many Scriptures	Guru Granth Sahib	The Vedas	The Bible (New World)	The Bible/Book of Mormon	The King James Bible
<b>After Life</b>	Resurrection & Judgement	Resurrection & Judgement	Resurrection & Judgement	Reincarnation	Reincarnation	Reincarnation	Resurrection & Judgement	Resurrection & Judgement	Reincarnation
<b>Holy Day</b>	Sunday	Saturday	Friday	No weekly Holy Day	Sunday	No weekly Holy Day	Sunday	Sunday	No weekly Holy Day
<b>Organ Donation</b>	No religious objection	No religious objection	No religious objection, but many would decline	No religious objection	No religious objection	No religious objection	Donation is a matter of individual conscience with provision that all organs & tissues be completely drained of blood	No religious objection	Not allowed as it would interfere with Jah's plan for mankind
<b>Last Offices /Rites</b>	There are so many denominations, so consult the family. Many will appreciate a priest or minister to pray with and anoint the patient. Contact the hospital Chaplain for specific advice. Some RC families may wish to place a rosary in the deceased patients hands/or crucifix at the patients head.	Remove tubes & instruments unless the family request otherwise. Patients must not be washed but may be dressed in a plain shroud. The body will be washed at local Jewish funeral association. The body should not be left alone	Ideally the body should be untouched by non-Muslims, but if it must be touched, gloves should be worn. If no family are present, close the patient's eyes and straighten the body. Head turned to the right shoulder, and the body covered with a plain white sheet. Body and hair should not be washed, nor the nails cut.	Different schools of Buddhism require different rituals – confirm correct one with the family. A Buddhist monk or nun may be asked to be present. The patient's body should be wrapped in a plain cloth in a room with no religious symbols.	Usually the family take responsibility for the last offices, but staff may be asked to close the patient's eyes, straighten the body and wrap in a plain white sheet. Keep the turban in sight of patient. Do not remove the eg miniature sword, or the comb which fastens the patient's hair. Do not trim the hair or cut the nails.	Ask the family before touching the body. The family may wish to wash the body. Do not remove sacred threads or jewellery. The patient's family may wish the body to be placed on the floor. They may wish to burn incense.	There are no particular rituals	There are no particular rituals. Relatives will advise staff if the patient wears one or two piece sacred undergarment. If this is the case, relatives will dress the patient in these items.	There are no particular rituals.  There is no funeral ceremony that marks the end of life.
<b>Funerals</b>	Burial or Cremation	ASAP within 24 hours. Usually burial.	ASAP within 24 hours. Usually burial	Cremation	Cremation	Cremation	Burial or Cremation	Usually burial	Usually burial