

World Religion Day

The aim of World Religion Day, held annually on the third Sunday in January, is to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony.

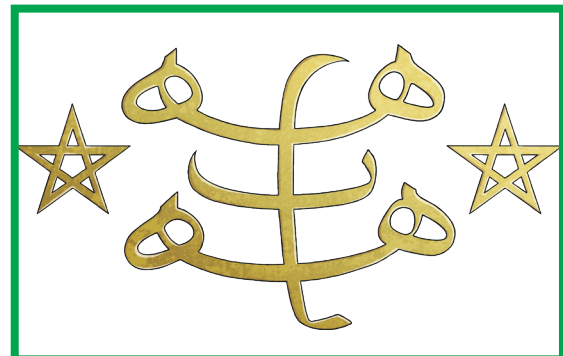
World Religion Day was started by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í faith. It was first known as being a day for World Peace Through World Religion in the state of Maine, United States, in 1947. By 1949, the event was being held in other communities in the US. In 1950, it became known as World Religion Day.

In time, World Religion Day moved on from being strictly a Bahá'í celebration and is now recognised as a wider celebration of interfaith harmony and understanding.

Now, on this day every year, through a variety of events held globally, people of every faith learn about and celebrate all religious groups, acknowledging and respecting their similarities.

What is the Bahá'í Faith?

- The Bahá'í faith was founded in 1863 in Iran by the prophet founder, Bahá'u'lláh.
- Bahá'ís believe in equality - that no one should be treated differently due to their creed (beliefs or faith) colour, age, race, gender or religion.
- They believe there is one God known by different names in all religions, e.g. Buddha, Moses, Jesus and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the diversity between the religions is due to the way people think about god. They also believe that all religions have a universal spiritual goal.



The Bahá'í ringstone symbol represents people connecting with God.

The Golden Rule

The six most widely practised religions worldwide are Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism, with nearly seventy-five percent of people practising one of these six religions.

A message of peace and love towards others is the essence of all the major world religions. This is called The Golden Rule. It is the principle that you should treat others as you would like to be treated yourself, and it is found in one form or another in the six main religions.

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The Six Main Religions

What do the six main religions say about kindness, respect and equality?

Sikhism

- I am a stranger to no one and no one is a stranger to me. I am a friend to all.
- Everyone is equal in God's eyes everyone should be treated equally.

Christianity

- In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.
- To love God and look after one another.

Hinduism

- This is the sum of duty; do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.
- One should not behave towards others in a way that is disagreeable to oneself.

Buddhism

- Treat not others in ways that you would find hurtful.

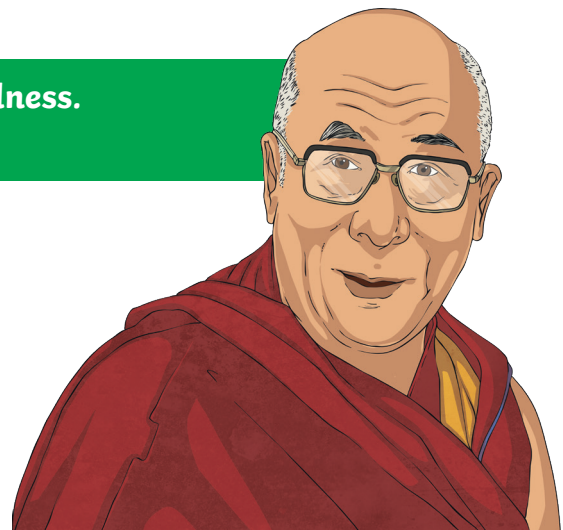
Judaism

- What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour.

Islam

- Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.

My religion is simple. My religion is kindness.
- Dalai Lama (Buddhist spiritual leader)



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Religion, Conflict and War

Conflict involves a struggle between people which may be physical, often due to differing ideas.

Throughout history, deeply held beliefs, clashes and disagreements over religion have been the instigator to many conflicts and wars between different religious groups.

Religion and Pacifism

Pacifism is the belief that war and violence are both unnecessary and unacceptable and that disputes should be settled peacefully.

For many people, religion can be a power for peace and most religions encourage forgiveness and discourage people from taking revenge on those who have wronged them.

Here's what some of the main religions say about conflict and pacifism:

Islam:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind." (Hadith)

Christianity:

Jesus said:

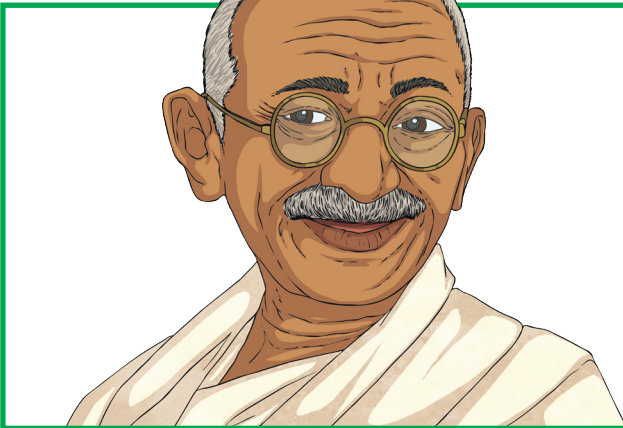
"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)



Christian preacher, Dr Martin Luther King, advocated Jesus' message that you should love everyone, including your enemies. He led the movement for black people to be given equal rights in the USA, without the use of violence.

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Hinduism:



"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

(Mahatma Gandhi - one of the most respected spiritual and political Indian leaders)

Buddhism:

"Hatred will not cease by hatred, but by love alone. This is the ancient law."

(Dhammapada Verse 5)

World Religion Day Aims

World Religion Day seeks to overcome historical differences between religious groups. It focuses on respecting other religions; celebrating their similarities and reflecting on the universal message – The Golden Rule – of the six main religions: to treat each other with respect and compassion and show how we can unify people to create a more harmonious and better world for everyone.