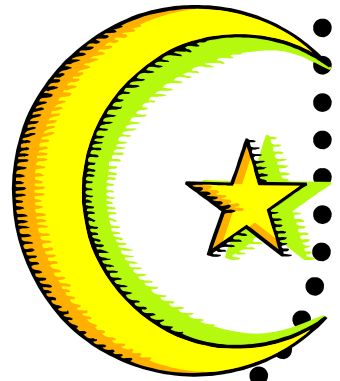
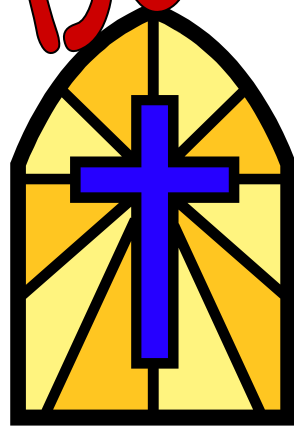




Faiths & Beliefs



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Discovering: Hinduism

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin	India
Founder	Developed out of Brahminism
Sacred Text	Vedas, Upanishads
Sacred Building	Mandir
Major Festivals	Diwali (also pronounced Diwali)
Holy Place	River Ganges is one of many holy places

Hinduism is the world's third most popular religion, with around 750 million followers. The religion of Hinduism originated in Northern India, near the river Indus, about 4000 years ago and is the world's oldest existing religion. Hinduism is practiced by more than 80% of India's population.

Where does the name Hindu come from?

The word "Hindu" comes from the name of the river Indus, which flows 1800 miles from Tibet through Kashmir and Pakistan to the sea.

What is the symbol for Hinduism?

Aum is the main symbol of Hinduism.

It is the sound heard in deepest meditation and is said to be the name most suited for God.



Discovering: Islam

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin

Saudi Arabia

Founder

Muslims believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam.

Sacred Text

The Qu'ran

Sacred Building

Mosque

Holy Places

Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem

Major Festivals

Ramadan, Eid-ul-Ftir, Eid-ul-Adha



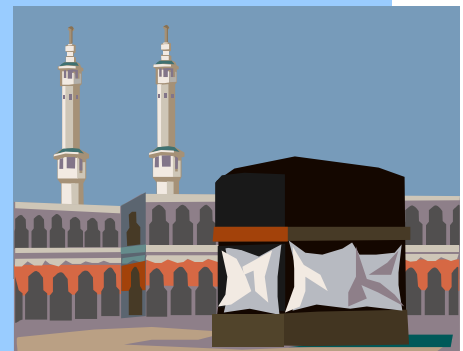
Islam is the second most popular religion in the world with over a thousand million followers. It is more often thought of as a complete way of life rather than a religion. Islam began in Arabia and was revealed to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad. Those who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that there is only one God, called Allah. Islam is mainly followed in the Middle East, Asia, and the north of Africa.

What does the word Islam mean?

The Arabic word "Islam" means submission and obedience, and derives from a word meaning 'peace'.

Why do Muslims face Mecca when praying?

Mecca or Makkah is the birthplace of prophet Muhammad. In the center of the mosque in Mecca, the cube-shaped building called Kaaba (Ka'bah) is found. All Muslims face the direction of the Kaaba during prayer. Muslims believe that the Kaaba is the holiest place on earth.



Discovering: Judaism

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin

Israel

Founder

Abraham

Sacred Text

The Torah

Sacred Building

Synagogue

Holy Place

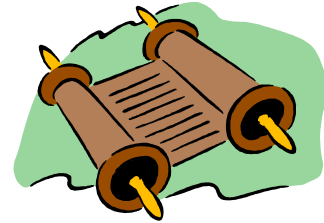
Jerusalem

Major Festivals

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Pesach (Passover), Shavout (Pentecost), Sukkot (Tabernacles)

Main Branches
(Denominations)

Orthodox, Reform, Conservative



Judaism is the oldest of the world's four biggest religions. It is also the smallest, with only about 12 million followers around the world.

Jewish history begins with the covenant established between God and Abraham around 1812 BC (over 3,800 years ago), during the Bronze Age, in the Middle East. The Torah (Jewish Law), was given to the Jews by the Prophet Moses (Moshe) about 3,300 years ago.

The Jewish calendar starts with the day when Adam and Eve were created (the Sixth Day of Creation). This year (2013) is 5773 on the Jewish Calendar.

What is the Symbol of Judaism?

The symbol or emblem of the Jewish people is the Magen David (Shield of David), also known as the Star of David.



Discovering: Buddhism

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin	North East India
Founder	Siddhartha Gautama (The Buddha)
Sacred Text	Tripitaka
Sacred Building	Stupa
Major Festivals	Wesak
Main Branches (Denominations)	Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese Groups including Soto and Zen.

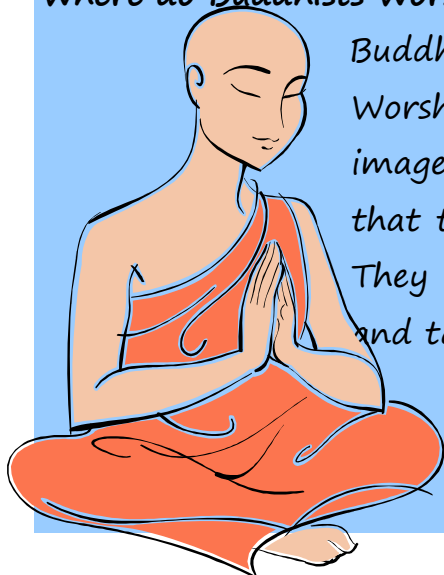


Buddhism began in north-eastern India and is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. The religion is 2,500 years old and is followed by 350 million Buddhists worldwide.

Who was Siddhartha Gautama?

Siddhartha Gautama is known as the Buddha. He was born around the year 580 BC in the village of Lumbini in Nepal.

Where do Buddhists Worship?



Buddhists worship at home or at a temple. Worshippers may sit on the floor barefoot facing an image of Buddha and chanting. It is very important that their feet face away from the image of Buddha. They listen to monks chanting from religious texts and take part in prayers.

Buddhism

A story from the Buddhist tradition

On a cold winter night, a poor man came to a Buddhist Temple and knelt in front of the statue of the Buddha. After saying a *mantra* before the Buddha, he started to cry.

The Monk in charge of the Temple, Dharma Master Wing Xi, approached him and asked him what the matter was.

The man explained: "Master, my wife and children have not eaten for several days. I have tried my best to support them, but I cannot find work anywhere. Now, because of the weather, I am suffering from arthritis and I don't think my family can last any longer. I come here to ask the Buddha to alleviate my sufferings."

As a Buddhist monk, Master Wing Xi did not have any money, and wondered how he could help. As he looked at the gold-plated statue of the Buddha in the main hall, he had an idea.

He ordered his students to remove the arm from the Statue, peel the gold off and give it to the man. "Sell it to a goldsmith and use the money for your family," he told him.

The other monks were shocked at his decision and protested. They asked: "How can you break the arm of the statue of the Buddha and give it away?"

Master Wing Xi said calmly: "You do not understand the *Dharma*. I do this to honour the Buddha himself." The other monks were angry. They thought: "How can this be considered to be an honour to the Buddha?"

But under the order from their Master, the monks started to chip off the gold plate from the statue, but they did not like doing it and complained as they worked.

Master Wing Xi listened to their complaints and said: "Do you not study the *Dharma*? Before he became a Buddha, in his previous lives, Prince Siddhartha gave his own life to feed a hungry tiger and cut off his own flesh to feed a hungry eagle. He donated everything he had, including his own body, for the well-being of other sentient beings. By helping this man, we honour the compassion of the Buddha."



Discovering: Christianity

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin

Israel

Founder

Jesus of Nazareth

Sacred Text

The Bible - Old and New Testaments

Sacred Building

Church, Chapel, Cathedral

Holy Places

Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Lourdes,
Rome, Canterbury

Major Festivals

Easter, Christmas

Main Branches
(Denominations)

Anglican, Roman Catholic,
Free Churches, Orthodox.



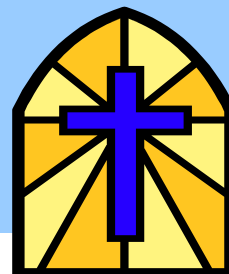
Christianity is the world's biggest religion, with about 2.2 billion followers worldwide. It is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ who lived in the Holy Land 2,000 years ago. Through its missionary activity Christianity has spread to most parts of the globe.

Where do Christians worship?

Christians worship in Churches, often built in the shape of a cross with the altar facing east towards the rising sun. The spiritual leaders are called priests or ministers.

What are the Christian symbols?

The cross is the main symbol. It reminds Christians that Jesus died on the cross to save them. The dove is the symbol of the holy spirit and peace. The fish symbol was created using the Greek letters which spell out ICHTHUS : Jesus Christ God's Son Saviour.



Discovering: Sikhism

Interesting Facts

Place of Origin

The Punjab (Panjab or Panj), an area of Northern India

Founder

Guru Nanak

Sacred Text

Guru Granth Sahib

Sacred Building

Gurdwara

Holy Place

Nankana Sahib, where the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak Dev was born.

Major Festivals

Hola Mohalla - February/March - a time for contests when Sikhs show their skills at athletics, horsemanship and martial arts.

Baisakhi - March/April - New Year's Day in the Punjab.

Diwali - October - a festival when the story of Hargobind, the sixth Guru, is told.

Guru Nanak's Birthday - October/November - The Guru Granth Sahib is carried through the streets by five men.



Sikhism is one of the world's youngest religions being founded just over 500 years ago. Despite being so young, it is the fifth largest religion in the world with over 20 million followers. Sikhism is not derived from any other religion. The word 'Sikh' in the Punjabi language means 'disciple', Sikhs are the disciples of God who follow the writings and teachings of the Ten Sikh Gurus.

What is the Symbol of Sikhism?

The symbol of Sikhism is known as the Khanda. It is made up of:

- The Khanda—a double edged sword—representing the belief in one God.
- The Chakkar—a circle—representing God without beginning or end and reminding Sikhs to remain within the rule of God.
- Two crossed Kirpans—swords—representing spiritual authority and political power.



Sikhism

A Sikh writes:

The word *seva* stands for: "To serve, to wait or attend upon, to honour or worship". In Scouting, we can show honour through the service we give.

Three types of *seva* are found in the Sikh way of life: that given in deed (*tan*), that given in thought (*man*) and that given through things (*dhan*). The first of them is the highest of all and is prescribed for every Sikh – 'Accursed are the hands and feet that engage not in *seva*' (*Bhai Gurdas, Varan, 27.1*). In traditional Indian society, physical labour was considered demeaning and was left to the lowest castes. By making it a holy thing, the Sikh Gurus established the dignity of labour, a concept almost unknown to the Indian society back then. The Gurus also created opportunities for it. For example, service in *langar* (the Guru's community kitchen) and serving the *sangat* (Sikh congregation) in ways such as grinding corn, fanning the congregation on a hot day and drawing water from the well. "I beg of You, O, Merciful One, make me the slave of Your servants... Let me have the pleasure of fanning them, drawing water for them, grinding corn for them and of washing their feet," prayed Guru Arjan (*Guru Granth Sahib, p518*).

True *seva* according to Sikh scriptures must be without desire (*nishkam*), in humility (*nimarta*), with purity of intention (*hirda suddh*), with sincerity (*chit lae*) and in utter selflessness (*vichon aap gavae*). Such *seva* for the Sikh is the doorway to dignity as well as to liberation (*mukti*): "If one earns merit here through *seva*, one will get a seat of honour in His Court hereafter (*Guru Granth Sahib, p26*)."

"The great True Guru is my caste and my honour, I have surrendered myself to the Guru," Nanak explained. He added: "Oh my True Guru, preserve Thou the honour of Thy disciple (*Guru Granth Sahib, p731*)."

