

How would you define religion, faith, spirituality and belief?

Do you think you can have one without the other?

How do these definitions inform how you live your life?

From the 2020 Confirmation Class:

What is/define religion?

A community of people, joined in a shared experiences focused on a similar belief system or mission. It is an understanding of how the world works, tied in to faith, and often defines what ideas you put your confidence in. It can be seen as an organized version of belief and a search for community that fits that belief. Generally the community has agreed on rules, or general guidelines. It is a system that connects people together with purpose and identity, reminding, encouraging and acknowledging the holy.

What is/define faith?

Faith is a belief in something that you can't prove, not based on just tangible facts. It is a trust in someone or something, not always to do with religions, but it can be what we believe about higher powers. Often faith and belief are very intertwined. Faith could be seen as a confidence in your belief. Faith could be understood as your core beliefs that carries you through life. Perhaps faith is what links to practice – for example, my faith and belief guide how I live my life.

What is/define spirituality?

Once our basic needs are met we might look at questions like: why are am I here and what does that mean for economic and social justice? Perhaps it is how I experience and live out my faith; how I practice my belief system. It is the way we look at life's meaning, and think about how our beliefs and actions effect people. It seems to be a deeply personal thing and revealed relationships or connections you have to a higher spirit or higher power. It is a pull or recognition of the force of the holy, of love, running through all existence.

What is/define belief?

The anchor that allows us to do what we define as faith and spirituality; the practice. It might be seen as the basis for all the other concepts. It could be defined as our personal philosophy or something we have crafted to provide guidance. What we determine as true, but rooted in some facts, knowledge and experience. We might say that it is what we understand to be true about God and the world. Even when we can't see it there is a belief that it is present, the holy is present

Additional Thoughts:

We might each have an individual experience – BUT perhaps what is most important is how to connect those experiences to the rest of life. Our spirituality should bring us to action and into relationship. When we have all four above it can bring us deep into ourselves AND bring ourselves to community - in relationship to people and world around us.

Can we have one (faith, belief, spirituality, religion) without the other?

Maybe, but when we have all them together is seems that we have a layering that brings a depth, a richness, and a cohesion that grounds, guides, challenges and amplifies our lived experiences.