

# Connecting Faith with All of Life

## What Does This Mean?

This sacred-secular divide is the idea that there is a secular world that is the setting for our public lives and is guided by reason, and then there is personal religious belief, which is viewed as a private hobby. This view implies that religious belief does not affect public life or any parts of the curriculum except Bible or religion classes. Some would say that faith cannot critique economics, politics, art, or education since they are out of its field, and many assume that faith and reason or faith and science are opposed to each other. This attitude has led to a fragmentation of knowledge into parts often seen as unrelated to each other and God. Such a division of knowledge is a comparatively modern idea. As a result, sometimes learning can feel impersonal and disconnected from the rest of life, and faith can become detached from our everyday teaching and learning practices and life choices. Ultimately the Christian faith is not about an abstract set of beliefs, but about a relationship with God that makes a radical difference to all of how life is lived.

*Until about a century and a half ago, scientists and scholars commonly assumed that knowledge formed a coherent whole; more precisely, they assumed that all parts of knowledge ultimately could be connected because every area of knowledge focused on some aspect of one single divine creation. J. Turner*

The Bible sees things very differently. The entire world is God's and can reveal him ([Psalm 24:1](#)), and all of life can be lived to the glory of God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). The musician and the artist as well as the engineer and the physicist are all engaged in the same work—exploring God's world—even if they do not know it. Jesus was called Emmanuel, meaning “God with us” ([Matthew 1:23](#)). He was involved with our world ([John 1:14](#)). Faith and reason are not opposed; we are to love God with all of our minds ([Matthew 22:37](#)). Many prominent scholars have been and continue to be Christians. Being curious about the world and [asking life's hard questions](#) are part of a robust faith.

The Bible does not deal with only religious issues; it deals with families, food, work, and politics ([1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)), as well as trades and farming ([Leviticus 19:10](#)). It also gives us a basic way of seeing all of life out of which we can explore and think through each issue we face. All of life comes under God.

For the Christian the material world can be a door to the sacred and God can be glimpsed through the things of this world: math, science, music, poetry, politics, and art. An experience of God is not restricted to religious settings. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins talked of the world being “charged” with God’s glory: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like the shining of shook foil.”

## What Does This Mean in School?

The false division between sacred and secular and between faith and reason is an issue for all subjects.

- Teachers can foster this oneness of knowledge by making connections across subjects and bringing these to students’ notice, showing how faith plays a role in history, science, or literature.
- Questions of belief and values can be asked in subjects other than Bible or religion class. Why not ask whether numbers go on forever in math, and why; or ask questions of ethics and meaning in science; or consider faith in other cultures in modern languages or geography?
- We can draw on religious sources. Why not canvass the local church on an environmental issue? Or present the work of a prominent Christian scholar?
- We should represent Christians as working in all spheres of life—not just as pastors, seminary professors, and missionaries but also as poets, engineers, and scientists.

When have you experienced knowledge being divided into “religious stuff” and “other knowledge”? Did this come from the students, or from other teachers, or is it just something people take for granted? Identify a lesson or unit where you could develop more integration using some of the suggestions above.

**Next:** Seeing Anew: Pursuit of Learning  
Honoring the wonder of God’s world



