

## The Origin of Religion

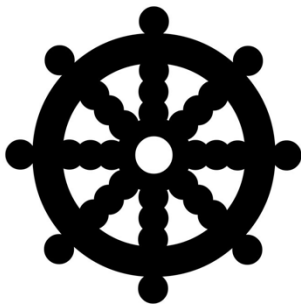
- From the Latin **religio** (respect for what is sacred) and **religare** (to bind, in the sense of an obligation)
- The term religion describes systems of belief and practice that define what people consider to be sacred or spiritual (Fasching and deChant 2001; Durkheim 1915)

### Religion

- Human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of special reverence. (Britannica)
- It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death. (Britannica)
- It is a set of organized beliefs, practices, and systems that most often relate to the belief and worship of controlling force, such as a personal god or another supernatural being. (The Psychology of Why People Believe)
- It often involves cultural beliefs, worldviews, text, prophecies, revelations, and morals that have spiritual meaning to members of the particular faith, and it can encompass a range of practices, including sermons, rituals, prayer, meditation, holy places, symbols, trances, and feasts.

## Buddhism

### Symbol



### Origins

- Founded in the late sixth century BCE by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha)

### Followers (approximate)

- 488 million

### Beliefs

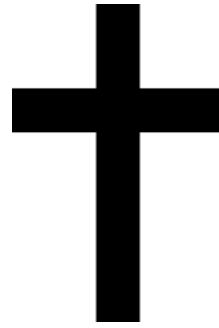
- The Four Noble Truths and following the Eightfold Noble Path to achieve 'nirvana' or enlightenment.

### Rituals and Practices

- Meditation, generosity and compassion to others.

## Christianity

### Symbol



### Origins

- Founded around 30CE by Jesus Christ in Modern day Israel.

### Followers (approximate)

- 2 billion

### Beliefs

- One God, Jesus Christ as the son of God. Jesus was sacrificed to save humans from the Sins they commit.

### Rituals and Practices

- Prayer, worship in church. Celebrate Easter and Christmas. Sunday as day of rest (Sabbath).

## Hinduism

### Symbol



### Origins

- Developed in the Indian subcontinent- considered to be one of the earliest religions in the world. Hinduism is a collection of belief systems that gathered together over the years.

### Followers (approximate)

- 900 million

### Beliefs

- Samsara-cycle of birth, life and death.
- Trimurti-Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer.

### Rituals and Practices

- Yoga, meditation, worship, pilgrimage.
- Various dietary laws, e.g. many Hindus are vegetarian and nearly all will not eat beef.

## Islam

### *Symbol*



### *Origins*

- Founded on the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century CE by the Prophet Muhammad.

### *Followers (approximate)*

- 1.3 billion

### *Beliefs*

- One God (Allah), Muhammad is the messenger of God.
- Five Pillars of Islam.

### *Rituals and Practices*

- Five Pillars of Islam including prayer five times daily; worship in a mosque.
- Food and drink should be halal and pork and alcohol are not consumed.

## Judaism

### *Symbol*



### *Origins*

- The Hebrew religion began with a covenant between God and Abraham, who was an early founder of the religion.

### *Followers (approximate)*

- 14 million

### *Beliefs*

- One God (Yahweh).
- Live ethically and with principles. Following the different covenants that are explained in the Torah, the religious book of Judaism.

### *Rituals and Practices*

- Worship in synagogue. Day of rest from Friday evening to Saturday evening (Shabbat). Eat kosher food.

## Why Religion is Important?

- Religion ideally serves several functions.
- It gives meaning and purpose to life, reinforces social unity and stability, serves as an agent of social control, promotes psychological and physical well-being, and may motivate people to work for positive social change. (Sociological Perspectives on Religion)
- According to Mark Stibich in his article “The Psychology of Why People Believe”, the purpose of religion is to serve as a source of comfort and guidance.
- It can also provide a sense of community and connection to tradition. Some research even suggests that it may affect health.

## Religious Classification

### *Animism*

- A religious belief that everything on Earth is imbued with a powerful spirit, capable of helping or harming human needs.
- The word animism is derived from the Latin word anima, which means "breath of life," or soul.
- Animists believe that all objects—animals, trees, rocks, rivers, plants, people—share the breath of life.
- According to their religious practices, all must live in harmony and be treated with equal respect.
- In the world of the animist, communication with each spiritual being is vital.
- Prayers and offerings are given to assure the goodwill of the spirits.
- The Finno-Ugric peoples of Finland, Estonia, and Russia, for example, tie little bags of gifts around tree trunks to please the tree spirits so that the trees will thrive.
- For instance, a man setting off on a journey from his African village might stop at the local Christian church to pray for a safe and successful trip. In addition, he might kill a chicken and leave it in a special spot by the side of the road to placate the spirits of the roadway and to guarantee safe passage.
- In religious rituals in Africa and the South Pacific, tribespeople dress up in masks and elaborate costumes to take on the spirit of a particular god. During the ceremony, the spirit is believed to enter the human body and give advice through the person's mouth.
- In Filipino spiritual beliefs, anito represents the presence of the supernatural in various forms, such as nature spirits, ancestral spirits, and deities.
- It is believed that anito can influence and guide human lives, offering protection, prosperity, and wisdom.
- By establishing a relationship with anito, individuals seek harmony with the spiritual world and the natural environment.
- Anito worship often involves rituals, offerings, and prayers.
- People create altars or sacred spaces dedicated to anito, adorned with symbolic objects and images.
- These rituals serve as a means of communication and invoke the presence of ancestral and divine spirits.

- Through offerings of food, flowers, and other items, practitioners' express gratitude and seek blessings from spiritual beings.

***Monotheism***

- Belief in the existence of one God, or the oneness of God.
- God in monotheism is conceived of as the creator of the world and humanity.
- Usually positioned as the polar opposite of polytheism, the belief in many gods.
- The word monotheism is a relatively modern one that was coined in the mid-17th century CE by the British philosopher Henry More (1614-1687 CE). It comes from the Greek words, monos (single) and theos (god).
- In the Western tradition, this 'belief in one god' specifically refers to the God of the Bible; the God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (and always written with a capital G).
- The three religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam readily fit the definition of monotheism, which is to worship one god while denying the existence of other gods.
- But, the relationship of the three religions is closer than that: They claim to worship the same god. While Judaism gave that god a name, “Yahweh,” both Christianity and Islam simply refer to him as “God” -- in Arabic, Islam’s founding language, “Allah” means “The God.”
- The three religions trace their origins back to Abraham, who, in Genesis, had humanity’s first relationship with God after the failures of Noah’s flood and the Tower of Babel.
- Judaism and Christianity trace their tie to Abraham through his son Isaac, and Islam traces it through his son Ishmael.

***Polytheism***

- The word "polytheism" stems from the Greek words polys which mean multiple and theos, which means god respectively.
- The biblical meaning of the word "'polytheism'" is the worship of more than one god/deity.
- Religions that practice polytheism include, but are not limited to: Hinduism, Buddhism, Wicca, Confucianism, Shintoism, various African tribal and/or folk religions, and various American tribal and/or folk religions.
- Examples of polytheism include, but are not limited to: Greek and Roman mythologies, Norse mythology, Hinduism, Shintoism, Wicca, and African tribal and folk religions.
- Usually, a polytheistic religion has a set of stories about the gods, this is called mythology.

***Polytheism vs. Monotheism***

***Polytheism***

- The belief in multiple gods
- Gods have limited power (air, sun, sea, etc.)
- Historically, the oldest forms of belief
- Examples:
  - Ancient Egypt
  - Greece and Rome
  - Hinduism

***Monotheism***

- The belief in only one god
- The one god is all powerful
- A more modern type of religion
- Examples:
  - Judaism
  - Christianity
  - Islam

**Character for the month of March**

***Gratefulness***

- a warm and deep appreciation for kindness received; gratitude or thankfulness; warm friendly feelings of gratitude.

***Contentment***

- a state of happiness and satisfaction; an emotional state of satisfaction that can be seen as a mental state drawn from being at ease in one's situation, body, and mind.

**Different Religions in the World**

**Judaism**

***Star of David***

- Jewish symbol composed of two overlaid equilateral triangles that form a six-pointed star. It appears on synagogues, Jewish tombstones, and the flag of the State of Israel.



***Menorah***

- the official emblem of the State of Israel, the key Jewish emblem.

- The Torah relates how God Himself gave Moses instructions for building this holy seven-branched candelabra on Mount Sinai: “You shall make a menorah of pure gold...” (Exodus 25: 31-40)



***Hamsa***

- a hand-shaped symbol, often with an eye in the center, believed to protect the evil eye.



**Judaism**

- Judaism is a monotheistic religion, believing in one God.
- **The Tanakh** – Jewish Scriptures
- As a monotheistic faith, followers of Judaism believe in one God who revealed himself through ancient prophets, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Solomon, and others.
- Judaism is one of the world’s oldest religions, dating back nearly 4,000 years, and is considered to

be the original Abrahamic faith (which includes Islam and Christianity).

- Judaism is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenantal relationship God established with the Children of Israel
- The most important text is the Torah (the first 5 books in the OT).
- Jews believe that the Ten Commandments are holy laws handed down to Moses by God.
- The central principle of the monotheistic faiths is the belief in the one God: the all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present creator of the universe.
- **Synagogues** – religious centers
- Throughout their history, Jews have been subject to persecution for their faith, including the deaths of about 6 million Jews during the Holocaust.
- The recitation of prayers, daily as well as on the Sabbath and Holy Days, is a defining characteristic of Jewish religious worship.
- The traditional Jewish prayer book is known as the **Siddur**
- The oldest and most important of all Jewish prayers is the **Shemah**.

### ***Food, Drink and Fasting***

- Always serve a selection of vegetarian and meat foods on separate trays.
- A variety of non-alcoholic drinks should also be available at any official function.
- Jewish laws require that only proper ritually slaughtered meat may be eaten.
- Only fish which have both fins and scales are permitted to be eaten; shellfish are prohibited.

### ***Religious Festivals and Days of Significance***

- **Sabbath (Shabbat)** – is meaningful and may be celebrated through family gatherings, quiet reflection, prayer, and communal activities.
- **Festival of Passover** – involves a family or community gathering known to commemorate the Exodus of Jews from Egypt and liberation from slavery in 1476 BCE.

## **Christianity**

### ***Christianity***

- Christian' is derived from the Greek Christos for the Hebrew messiah ("anointed one").
- **Christianoi**, "followers of the Christ," became the name of a group who followed the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in 1<sup>st</sup>-century Israel and proclaimed him the predicted messiah of the prophets.
- The most widely practiced religion in the world.
- The Christian faith centers on beliefs regarding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- They believe there's only one God, and He created the heavens and the earth. This divine Godhead consists of three parts: the **Father** (God himself), the **Son** (Jesus Christ), and the **Holy Spirit**
- The essence of Christianity revolves around life, death, and Christian beliefs in the resurrection of Jesus.

- Christians believe God sent his son Jesus, the Messiah, to save the world.
- They believe Jesus was crucified on the cross to offer the forgiveness of sins and was resurrected three days after his death before ascending to heaven.
- Christians contend that Jesus will return to earth again in what's known as the Second Coming.
- The Holy Bible includes important scriptures that outline Jesus's teachings, the lives and teachings of major prophets and disciples, and offer instructions for how Christians should live.
- The **Cross** is a symbol of Christianity.
- The most important Christian holidays are Christmas (which celebrates the birth of Jesus) and Easter (which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus).

## **Islam**

### ***Islam***

- The major world religion founded by Muhammad in Arabia in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE.
- The Arabic world Islam means "**surrender**" – specifically, surrender to the will of the one God, called **Allah** in Arabic.
- Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion, that regards the Prophet Muhammad as the last and most perfect of God's messengers, who include Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others.
- **Allah** is viewed as the sole God- creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world.
- The sacred scripture of Islam is the Qur'an which contains God's revelations of Muhammad.
- Islam is the second-largest religion in the world after Christianity.
- Followers of Islam are called **Muslims**.
- Islam started in Mecca, in modern-day Saudi Arabia, during the time of the prophet Muhammad.
- Followers of Islam aim to live a life of complete submission to Allah. They believe that nothing can happen without Allah's permission, but humans have free will.
- Muslims contend that Muhammad was the final prophet.
- Mosques are places where Muslims worship.
- Some important Islamic holy places include the Kaaba shrine in Mecca, the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, and the Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina.
- The prophet Muhammad, sometimes spelled Mohammed or Mohammad, was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in A.D. 570.
- Muslims believe he was the final prophet sent by God to reveal their faith to mankind.
- According to Islamic texts and tradition, an angel named Gabriel visited Muhammad in 610 while he was meditating in a cave.
- The angel ordered Muhammad to recite the words of Allah.
- Muslims believe that Muhammad continued to receive revelations from Allah throughout the rest of his life.
- Starting in about 613, Muhammad began preaching throughout Mecca the messages he received.

- He taught that there was no other God but Allah and that Muslims should devote their lives to this God.

**5 Pillars of Islam that are essential to their faith:**

***Shahada***

- to declare one’s faith in God and belief in Muhammad

***Salat***

- to pray five times a day (at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening)

***Zakat***

- to give to those in need

***Sawm***

- to fast during Ramadan

***Hajj***

- to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during a person’s lifetime if the person is able.

**The two major Muslim holidays are:**

***Eid al-Adha***

- celebrates the Prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son for Allah

***Eid al-Fitr***

- marks the end of Ramadan – the Islamic holy month of fasting.

- Muslims also celebrate other holidays, such as the Islamic New Year and the birth of Muhammad.

**Hinduism**

***Hinduism***

- is the world’s oldest religion, according to many scholars, with roots and customs dating back more than 4,000 years.

- Today, with more than 1 billion followers, Hinduism is the third-largest religion worldwide, after Christianity and Islam. Roughly 94 percent of the world’s Hindus live in India.

- Because the religion has no specific founder, it’s difficult to trace its origins and history.

- Hinduism is unique in that it’s not a single religion but a compilation of many traditions and philosophies.

- Hindus worship several different gods and minor deities, honor a range of symbols, respect several different holy books and celebrate with a wide variety of traditions, holidays, and customs.

- Hinduism embraces many religious ideas. For this reason, it’s sometimes referred to as a “way of life” or a “family of religions,” as opposed to a single, organized religion.

- Most forms of Hinduism are henotheistic, which means they worship a single deity, known as “**Brahman**”, but still recognize other gods and goddesses.

- Followers believe there are multiple paths to reaching their god.

- Hindus believe in the **doctrines of Samsara** (the continuous cycle of life, death, and reincarnation) and **Karma** (the universal law of cause and effect).

- Hindus strive to achieve **Dharma**, which is a code of living that emphasizes good conduct and morality.

- Hindus revere all living creatures and consider the cow a sacred animal.

- Food is an important part of life for Hindus. Most don’t eat beef or pork, and many are vegetarians.

- Hinduism is closely related to other Indian religions, including Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.

- The primary sacred texts, known as the **Vedas**, were composed around 1500 B.C.

- This collection of verses and hymns was written in Sanskrit and contains revelations received by ancient saints and sages.

- Hindus worship many gods and goddesses in addition to Brahman, who is believed to be the supreme god force present in all things.

**Most Prominent deities**

***Brahma***

- the god responsible for the creation of the world and all living things

***Vishnu***

- the god that preserves and protects the universe

***Shiva***

- the god that destroys the universe to recreate it

***Devi***

- the goddess that fights to restore dharma

***Krishna***

- the god of compassion, tenderness and love

***Lakshmi***

- the goddess of wealth and purity

***Saraswati***

- the goddess of learning

**Buddhism**

***Buddhism***

- is a faith that was founded by **Siddhartha Gautama**—also known as “**the Buddha**”—more than 2,500 years ago in India.

- Gautama was born into a wealthy family as a prince in present-day Nepal. Although he had an easy life, Gautama was moved by suffering in the world.

- He decided to give up his lavish lifestyle and endure poverty.

- After six years of searching, Buddhists believe Gautama found enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi tree.

- He spent the rest of his life teaching others about how to achieve this spiritual state.

- When Gautama passed away around 483 B.C., his followers began to organize a religious movement.
- Buddha's teachings became the foundation for what would develop into Buddhism.
- In the 3rd century B.C., Ashoka the Great, the Mauryan Indian emperor, made Buddhism the state religion of India.
- Buddhist monasteries were built, and missionary work was encouraged.
- Over the next few centuries, Buddhism began to spread beyond India
- As a non-theistic faith with no god or deity to worship, some scholars describe Buddhism as a philosophy or a moral code rather than an organized religion.
- Many of the beliefs and practices of Buddhism revolve around the concept of suffering and its causes.
- Followers of Buddhism don't acknowledge a supreme god or deity. They instead focus on achieving enlightenment—a state of inner peace and wisdom.
- When followers reach this spiritual echelon, they're said to have experienced **Nirvana** (a place of perfect peace and happiness, like heaven).
- The religion's founder, Buddha, is considered an extraordinary being, but not a god. The word Buddha means "**enlightened.**"
- The path to enlightenment is attained by utilizing morality, meditation, and wisdom. Buddhists often meditate because they believe it helps awaken truth.
- Some scholars don't recognize Buddhism as an organized religion, but rather, as a "way of life" or a "spiritual tradition."
- Buddha's most important teachings, known as **The Four Noble Truths**, are essential to understanding the religion.
- Buddhists embrace the concepts of karma (the law of cause and effect) and reincarnation (the continuous cycle of rebirth).
- Followers of Buddhism can worship in temples or in their own homes.
- Buddhist monks, or bhikkhus, follow a strict code of conduct, which includes celibacy.
- There is no single Buddhist symbol, but several images have evolved that represent Buddhist beliefs, including the **lotus flower**, the **eight-spoked dharma wheel**, the **Bodhi tree** and the **swastika** (an ancient symbol whose name means "well-being" or "good fortune" in Sanskrit).

### ***Dharma***

- Buddha's teachings are known as "dharma." He taught that wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity, and compassion were important virtues.
- Specifically, all Buddhists live by five moral precepts, which prohibit:
  1. Killing living things
  2. Taking what is not given
  3. Sexual misconduct
  4. Lying
  5. Using drugs or alcohol

### ***The Four Noble Truths***

1. The truth of suffering (dukkha)
2. The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya)
3. The truth of the end of suffering (nirhodha)
4. The truth of the path that frees us from suffering (maggā)

### ***Buddhism***

- The Buddha taught his followers that the end of suffering, as described in the fourth Noble Truth, could be achieved by following an Eightfold Path.
- The Eightfold Path of Buddhism teaches the following ideals for ethical conduct, mental discipline, and achieving wisdom:
  1. Right Understanding (Samma ditthi)
  2. Right thought (Samma sankappa)
  3. Right Speech (Samma vacā)
  4. Right action (Samma kammanta)
  5. Right livelihood (Samma ajiva)
  6. Right effort (Samma vayama)
  7. Right mindfulness (Samma sati)
  8. Right concentration (Samma samadhi)

### ***Dalai Lama***

- The Dalai Lama is the leading monk in Tibetan Buddhism.
- Followers of the religion believe the Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of a past lama who has agreed to be born again to help humanity.
- There have been 14 Dalai Lamas throughout history.

### ***Buddhist Holidays***

- Every year, Buddhists celebrate Vesak, a festival that commemorates Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death.
- During each quarter of the moon, followers of Buddhism participate in a ceremony called Uposatha. This observance allows Buddhists to renew their commitment to their teachings.
- They also celebrate the Buddhist New Year and participate in several other yearly festivals.

### ***Buddhist Holy Book***

- Buddhists revere many sacred texts and scriptures. Some of the most important are:
  - Tipitaka:** These texts, known as the "three baskets," are thought to be the earliest collection of Buddhist writings.
  - Sutras:** There are more than 2,000 sutras, which are sacred teachings embraced mainly by Mahayana Buddhists.
  - The Book of the Dead:** This Tibetan text describes the stages of death in detail.

## **Religions Present in the Philippines**

### **Elements / Characteristics of religions**

#### ***Belief System***

- Very complex system of beliefs.
- an unseen but very powerful world of gods (or one single god), spirits, angels, demons, ancestors, and many more."
- center attention on these unseen beings and powers.

- very important or sacred to people (heroes) from the past
- those are the creators of these religions or it might be the people closely linked to the creators.
- "Belief about human nature and the natural world."
- beliefs about what human beings are, their relationship with the world of the unseen spiritual beings, with each other and the world around us.
- Also they might see other things such as animals or things as being sacred or less secular.
- Belief about salvation and how human beings go about getting in tune with whatever they see as the center of their belief systems.
- The interior may be a spiritual being, oneself or even nature.
- Several beliefs fit together into a fairly complete systematic interpretation of the universe and the human beings' place in it - **WORLDVIEW**.

### ***Community / Organization***

- The belief system is shared, and its ideas are practiced by a group.
- practice the same religion
- worship together
- called a congregation
- often subject to formal commitments such as religious vows, as in a convent or a monastery.

### ***Rituals / Ceremonies***

- Things they do all seem to follow a certain pattern each time
- There are two main types of rituals being:
  1. **Rites of Passage** (in particular, initiation rites): transition from childhood to adulthood. Through these rituals, people become full and responsible members of the religious community.
  2. **Rites of Worship or Devotion** - communal private acts of acts of praise or meditation in which a large group of believers participate in. Beliefs are enacted and made real through ceremonies.

### ***Dogma / Ethics***

- code of approved moral conduct
- What is regarded as morally good or evil is not particularly the same in each religion nor are the same values emphasized in religions
- The foundation on which believers base their moral codes."

### ***Sacred Objects / Symbols***

- are a visual summary of a whole religion.
- every symbol carries a special meaning behind it.
- distinction is made between the sacred and the ordinary
- deliberate use of different language, clothing, and architecture.

### ***Sacred Text***

- the history of a particular religion, known for its significance.
- In some religions the text is known for being the actual words of God in others, the words are of people that are inspired by God.
- very holy, wise and devout people.

### ***Social Structure***

- There are three main aspects of the social structure:
  1. **Sacred Space** - (buildings - the house of gods, where people gather to perform rituals)
  2. **Sacred Time** - periods for work, periods for worshipping
  3. **Sacred Person** - give different roles according to genders and also group people according to their orders

### ***Sacred Stories***

- abstract statements or creed
- reading those stories helps people gain insight of a particular religion
- The three main types of sacred stories are:
  - **myths** - in the beginning' at that time when the world was not as it is now
  - **legends** - sacred or important people
  - **parables** - stories about ordinary people that makes you feel about yourself, the way you act and what you believe in

### ***Religious Experiences***

- understood to be contacts with gods or spirits or even insights into truth.
- There are two major types of these experiences being:
  - **Immediate Experience**: believers direct contact with the unseen world, believe to be in touch with god.
  - **Mediated Experience**: believers understand that it is through some person, act or even an object that they are united with the unseen world of the gods or spirits.

### ***Emotional Experiences***

- Among the emotional experiences typically associated with religion are:
  - dread
  - guilt
  - awe
  - mystery
  - devotion
  - conversion
  - liberation
  - rebirth
  - ecstasy
  - bliss
  - inner peace.

### ***Inter-Faith/ Inter-Religious Dialogue***

- Jacques Dupuis, Doctor in theology defines **DIALOGUE**: "As a specific, integral element of evangelization; dialogue means all positive and constructive Interreligious relations and connections with individuals and communities of other faiths, which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions."
- It is also referred to as interfaith dialogue, is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual



understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences.

- The term refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions, (i.e. “faiths”) at both the individual and institutional level. Each party remains true to their own beliefs while respecting the right of the other to practice their faith freely.
- Interfaith dialogue is not just words or talk. It includes human interaction and relationships. It can take place between individuals and communities and on many levels.
- It is not just something that takes place on an official or academic level only – it is part of daily life during which different cultural and religious groups interact with each other directly, and where tensions between them are the most tangible.
- It is based on witness to one’s faith as well as openness to the religion of another.
- Dialogue includes promoting respect, mutual understanding, and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others’ religious traditions; encouraging the study of religions; and promoting the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.
- Implies speaking and listening, giving and receiving, mutual growth and enrichment.

#### **What dialogue aims to achieve?**

- Increase mutual understanding and good relations.
- Build understanding and confidence to overcome or prevent tensions.
- Break down the barriers and stereotypes which lead to distrust, suspicion and bigotry.

#### **Ecumenism**

- Within the Catholic Church, the term ‘Ecumenism’ refers to efforts of different Christian Churches to develop closer relationships and develop better understandings of their shared faith. While interfaith dialogue is the means of co-operation with those people of Non-Christian religions.
- The goals of ecumenism are unity in: the essentials of the faith, sacramental life, worship, common mission, and service.
- The ecumenical movement seeks to restore the richness of the faith to its full expression in both theology and practice.

#### **How does ecumenism differ from interreligious dialogue?**

- Ecumenism seeks to give more visible expression to the deep unity in the Trinitarian life that unites Christians through their common baptism.
- Interfaith or interreligious dialogue pertains to Christian relations with members of other world religions.

#### **Example:**

- Dialogue among Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Methodists is not interfaith dialogue but ecumenical or interchurch dialogue. They

are all members of the same religion or faith, i.e. Christianity.

- When Christians dialogue with Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, or Muslims, it is interfaith or interreligious because each belongs to a different religion.
- The goal of interfaith dialogue is not unity in faith and worship, but mutual understanding and respect, and mutual enrichment enabling us all to respond more fully to God’s call.
- It includes collaboration wherever possible in response to the societal problems we commonly face.

**Good luck, CS 1-2!**