

# Basic Beliefs Chart

Use the following chart to compare the world religions discussed in this book.  
This information is also included in the "Sum It Up!" pages in the student booklets.



<u>God</u>	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>The World</u>	<u>Human Beings</u>	<u>Sin</u>	<u>The Afterlife</u>	<u>Religious Texts</u>
God is the ruler of all and exists as one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is the eternal creator of the universe in which we live. God reveals himself to human beings through the Bible and through creation.	Jesus was 100 percent God and 100 percent man. He is God's Son and part of the Trinity. Jesus died on a cross and was resurrected for the forgiveness of sins.	The world was created by God.	Humans were created by God for relationship with him. Humans are separated from God by sin, but can find forgiveness through faith in Jesus.	All human beings are sinful and that sin separates them from God.	Human beings who have a faith relationship with Jesus will go to heaven when they die and spend eternity with God. Those who do not place their faith in Jesus will be separated from God in hell.	The Bible
God or "Brahman" is a universal spirit that has taken on many different forms. People are part of that spirit and the ultimate goal of Hindus is to be absorbed back into the spirit of Brahman.	Jesus was one of many of god's sons. He was a teacher, or guru. He didn't rise from the dead.	The world was created by Brahma. Every living creature is believed to have a soul.	Humans came into existence through Brahman and are thought to be part of god like drops in the sea.	There really isn't such a thing as sin; however, a person's future depends entirely on his or her present behavior. Bad actions result in future suffering, experienced in the exact same measure (karma).	When a person dies, he or she returns to earth in the form of another living creature determined by karma. The only way to break this cycle of reincarnation is through philosophy or knowledge, works of religious observance, and devotion.	There are several religious texts in Hinduism. The Vedas (the oldest, written about 1000 B.C.) contain Hindu law, the Great Epics tell great stories, and the Puranas contain mythology from the medieval period.

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### God

### Jesus

### The World

### Human Beings

### Sin

### The Afterlife

### Religious Text:

Buddhism  
There is no god (or if there is, it is unknowable). However, there is a universal force that runs through all things.

Jesus was a man who had good teachings. He may have been an enlightened teacher. He was not god.

Zen Buddhists don't give an explanation for the world's existence. They believe people cannot definitively understand where the universe came from.

Humans have difficulty understanding suffering. By overcoming suffering, humans can reach enlightenment.

There really is no such thing as sin. However, people can create bad karma through their thoughts and actions.

Nirvana (bliss) may be reached after complete enlightenment. Many Buddhists believe that one's consciousness will cease existing after death and the person becomes a part of the energy that makes up the universe.

The Tipitaka are the collected writings of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha). Buddhists also refer to a variety of writings from enlightened teachers throughout the ages.

New Age Movement  
God is an impersonal force, sometimes called a consciousness or an energy. God is *all* and *all* is god. God is the life within all things.

Jesus was an enlightened teacher and is on the same level with other holy men such as Buddha (Buddhism) and Krishna (Hinduism). New Age adherents see the Christ as a cosmic, divine entity that dwelt for a time in Jesus' body.

The earth is a cosmic goddess, sometimes referred to as Mother Earth. Since all is one and god is all, the world and humankind are one and are both divine.

Humankind is god. Because humans are god, they have unlimited potential. Humans, as gods, can create their own realities.

Human beings do not have a sin problem; they have a problem of ignorance. Humans are ignorant or unaware of their divinity.

Through reincarnation, a person is eventually made perfect and ultimately reunited with the divine god-force. Dead people who are in a state of perfected enlightenment can be contacted via channeling for information and insight.

The New Age movement uses many different sources, such as the Bible and Levi Dowling's *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. The New Age movement also adheres to new revelations from channeling.

Judaism  
God is one and is eternal. He cannot be divided into parts or beings in any way. God is the creator and has revealed himself and his will for us through the law, the prophets, and the rabbis' teachings.

Jesus was a good teacher who taught things that were similar to the teachings of other rabbis of his day. He was not divine.

The world was created by God.

All human beings were created by God, but the Jews were chosen to be God's special people through whom he would bless the world.

People are not born sinful, but they do have the freedom to choose between right and wrong.

People who generally follow God's teachings and refrain from too much sinning have hope of the resurrection. Jewish teachings on the nature of the afterlife are diverse and somewhat vague.

The books of the Christian's Old Testament are considered God's Word. The teachings of the rabbis (the Talmud) hold a place of high importance as well.

### God

### Jesus

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### Human Beings

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### Religious Text

Islam  
There is only one god, Allah, who has no equals. Nothing compares with Allah, as Muslims state in their cry, "Allah is greater."

Jesus was a very highly esteemed messenger of Allah. Jesus was one of the greatest prophets but was not God. Jesus did not die but "was made to appear so to them." Allah saved Jesus from the cross by raising him to himself before death.

The world was created by Allah in six days.

Humans were created by Allah to be basically good. They have a special responsibility to care for Allah's creation and are destined for heaven unless they disobey Allah.

Allah has given humans the choice to obey or disobey his laws. Disobedience is sin.

Muslims who perform all the essential obligations in worship with the proper attitude of total submission to Allah will go to paradise (heaven). All others go to hell, a place of everlasting torment.

The Koran is believed to be the final word of Allah given to human Muslims believe the angel Gabriel gave it directly to Muhammad and it also is divinely inspired. The Hadith, collected sayings and acts of the prophet Muhammad, is an important text but is not considered divinely inspired.

Mormonism  
God was once a man and lived on "an earth." God is one of many gods.

Jesus lived as a sinless human to show people the way to earn their own exaltation.

The world was created by god so he could give his spirit children human life and the chance of eternal exaltation.

People are god's spirit children, placed on earth in human form to attain eternal exaltation.

Adam's sin actually fulfilled god's purpose of populating the earth. Humans must follow many laws to earn exaltation.

Faithful Mormon men will be exalted and become gods, ruling and populating their own earths. Women can be exalted only if sealed in marriage to a Mormon man.

The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, The Pearl of Great Price

Jehovah's Witnesses  
God the Father is god alone. Jesus is god's first creation and is the same as Michael the archangel. The Holy Spirit is god's impersonal, active energy force.

Jesus is god's created son. Jesus was a perfect human being, but was not god. His death and resurrection earned humans the right to perfect life on earth.

The world was created by god as a paradise for perfect human existence.

Humans were created by god to live a perfect life on a paradise earth.

All human beings are sinful because of Adam's sin. Jesus' perfect human life and death gives humans the right to perfect life on a paradise earth, but people must earn that prize by living rightly.

Anointed people (144,000) will enjoy rebirth as god's spiritual children and rule with him in heaven. Other faithful Jehovah's Witnesses followers who obey all the laws have a chance to live forever on a paradise earth. All others are destroyed.

The New World Translation of the Bible and publications of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

# The Five Pillars of Islam



## STATION 3: Almsgiving

Read this verse from the Koran:

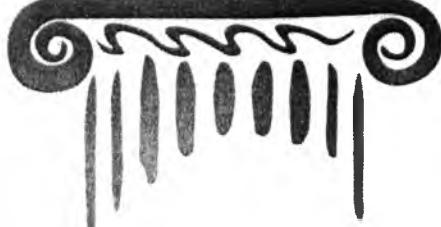
"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise" (Koran 9:60).

Now read Matthew 6:2-4 and 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Discuss this question:

- What similarities or differences do you notice between the two religions' motivation for giving?

As a group, brainstorm acts of service Christian teenagers might perform (such as giving money to the church or volunteering at a soup kitchen), and write an act of service on one coin for each of your group members. When you're done, tape your coins to the pillar.



## STATION 4: Fasting

Read these verses from the Koran:

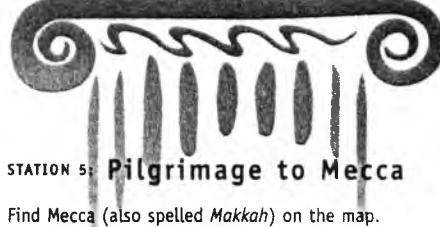
"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil)...Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should [fast during the month of Ramadan], and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that...ye may be thankful" (Koran 2:183, 185).

Now read Matthew 4:1-4 and 2 Timothy 1:7.

Discuss this question:

- Fasting reminds Muslims to rely on Allah. On what things do you rely on besides God?

Work together to memorize Matthew 4:4.



## STATION 5: Pilgrimage to Mecca

Find Mecca (also spelled Makkah) on the map.

Now read these quotes:

"Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at [M]ecca, a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither" (Koran 3:96-97).

"By this annual assembly, Islam is bound together in a visible rite of unity."

Read John 17:20-23 and Hebrews 10:25.

Discuss this question:

- What similarities or differences do you notice between the Islamic annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Christian weekly church attendance?

Hold hands and pray for unity among Christians worldwide.

# CONFUSION

This is a great crowd breaker for parties or socials.

Type up the list below for everyone in the group; however, no two lists should be in the same order unless the group is very large. Each person is given a list and a piece of bubble gum. The winner is the first one to complete all ten things on their list in order. The idea is to have everyone doing something different at the same time. You won't be able to tell

who is winning until the game is over. Anyone who will not do what someone asks him to do is disqualified.

- Get 10 different autographs: first, middle, and last names (on the back of this sheet).
- Unlace someone's shoe, lace it, and tie it again (not your own).
- Get a hair over six inches long from someone's head (let them remove it).
- Get a girl to do a somersault and sign her name here. \_\_\_\_\_
- Have a boy do five pushups for you and sign his name here. \_\_\_\_\_
- Play ring-around-a-rosy with someone and sing out loud.
- Do 25 jumping jacks and have someone count them off for you. Have that person sign here when you have done them. \_\_\_\_\_
- Say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag as loudly as you can.
- Leapfrog over someone five times.
- You were given a piece of bubble gum at the beginning of the race. Chew it and blow ten bubbles. Find someone who will watch you do it and sign here when you have finished. \_\_\_\_\_