

TO THE POINT

What are some ways we can respect other religions' holidays?

Respecting others' religions is one of our key beliefs: "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may" (Articles of Faith 1:11).

Religious holidays often involve a form of worship. Just as members of our Church celebrate Christmas and Easter, members of other faiths celebrate these holy days or other holidays in honor of a particular deity or to commemorate an event in their religious history.

You can respect others' religious holidays by first recognizing when those days are celebrated. You can read about certain religious holidays and talk to your friends about how they show their love to God on these special days. You should not make fun of their beliefs, customs, or practices. Respect the religious symbols they use to celebrate and worship.

If you are invited to participate, ask politely for their suggestions about how you can do so appropriately. They may be happy to simply have you watch what they do, or they may

suggest some activities you can join in on and others you should avoid. For example, if one of their religious customs is against your beliefs, such as drinking wine, you can politely decline participation, or perhaps you can drink water. The more you agree on in advance, the greater the opportunity to avoid embarrassment.

You can show respect by learning how others worship, and you can also invite others to celebrate your religious holidays with you so they can understand what you believe. **NE**

What is the difference between fasting and going without food?

Going without food will just make you hungry. Fasting, done with a specific purpose and accompanied by prayer, will bring you closer to God and give you blessings and spiritual strength (see Isaiah 58:6–11).

Unlike going without food, when we fast, we choose to do so for a specific, spiritual purpose. You could fast for the Lord's help in understanding gospel principles or in handling personal decisions and experiences. You may also fast for blessings for



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others, such as their health or that they'll accept the gospel (see Alma 6:6). You may even fast to express gratitude to our Heavenly Father.

Prayer is another element that makes fasting different from going without food. A fast should begin and end with sincere prayer, and throughout the fast you could meditate and pray about what you are fasting for. This focuses your attention on why you are fasting rather than on how hungry you may feel. "Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am" (Isaiah 58:9). **NE**



Anointing with oil has always been part of true, revealed religion.

Why are people anointed with oil when they receive a priesthood blessing?

The scriptures frequently refer to anointing, often associated with the healing of the sick. For example, in Mark 6:13 we read that the Apostles "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." And in James 5:14 we read: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

To anoint means to apply oil or ointment to a person's head or body. In ancient times this was done for various reasons. Sometimes it was a sign of hospitality or of routine grooming. Those who were sick or injured were anointed with oil or ointment as medicine. But anointing was also done for sacred

reasons. For example, holy anointing oil was used under the law of Moses (see Exodus 40:15). Prophets anointed priests and kings, and the sick were anointed with oil as part of the procedure of healing by faith and by the laying on of hands.

In the Church today, olive oil that has been consecrated (blessed by Melchizedek Priesthood holders) for sacred purposes is used in various sacred ceremonies, including administration to the sick. "Although the scriptures do not specifically so state, we may confidently assume that anointing with oil has been part of true, revealed religion ever since the gospel was first introduced on this earth to Adam."¹

Why is olive oil used rather than some other type of oil? This is never stated specifically in the scriptures, although New Testament parables use oil as a symbol of both healing and light (see Matthew 25:1–13; Luke 10:34). The olive branch is often used as a symbol of peace, and the olive tree is used in scripture as a symbol of the house of Israel (see Jacob 5). Olive oil can also symbolize the Savior's Atonement, since the bitter olive, when crushed, provides oil that is sweet. **NE**

NOTE

1. Bible Dictionary, "Anoint."

