

Spirituality Compared to Religion

Although often used interchangeably and containing similarities, these two terms are not the same. Both religion and spirituality are ways we can orient ourselves toward the Divine. Furthermore, both religion and spirituality offer a sense of purpose, meaning and a direction to life. There are also many differences.

- Religion exists within a structured organization. Spirituality is free of any organization.
- Spirituality can find expression in or through religion, or it can find expression outside of religious structure. Religion exists solely within a formalized structure.
- Religion uses a hierarchy of leadership to guide one to what is holy. Spirituality is based on a direct one-to-one relationship with God.
- Religion adheres to ancient texts and mythological stories as the source of truth. Spirituality is open to a constant flow of new insights in truth through our individual consciousness.
- Religion adheres to a materialist worldview. Spirituality affirms an ultimate unseen reality that is knowable through our evolving consciousness.
- Religion is grounded in dogma and doctrine that determines what is to be believed. Spirituality is universal in nature and is open to individual discovery.
- Religion is exclusive in nature and open primarily to people of that faith or belief. Spirituality is inclusive and is open to people of all faiths or no religious faith at all.
- In religion, the divine is clearly defined, personified and named. In spirituality, the divine is an indefinable presence or spirit within each individual and is also an omnipresent reality throughout all of creation.