

Center for
Religious & Spiritual Life

QA



“Today’s college students have very high levels of spiritual interest and involvement.

Many are actively engaged in a spiritual quest and are exploring the meaning and purpose of life.”

- Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Students’ Search for Meaning and Purpose, 2003

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How do I find a spiritual community or place of worship?



ANSWER:

Go to smith.edu/religiouslife to find local places of worship that welcome Smith students and how to get there. Our staff at the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life and other students are good sources of advice.

I've never looked for my own church/synagogue/mosque/spiritual community before. Where do I start?

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ANSWER:

We know it can feel like a big step. Our team at the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life and our student leaders can help you find a community.

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I've been involved in my home community. How can I get involved at Smith?



ANSWER:

Smith's many student religious organizations are open to all Smithies. Check the Smith Social Network or the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life's Facebook page to find information on student organizations, events, and programs.

Community service has been an important part of my life. Can I volunteer at Smith?

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ANSWER:

Community service and action for social justice are an important part of a Smith education. The Jandon Center for Community Collaboration has relationships with agencies where you can volunteer, e.g. you can tutor, work at a homeless shelter, teach science to 3rd graders, or work with urban gardeners.

Does the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life offer interfaith services and educational opportunities?

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ANSWER:

The Center offers numerous programs every year about religions, ethics, wellness, social justice, and spiritual questioning. We also include activities and events that are simply fun! Coming to Soup, Salad, and Soul on Fridays at noon in the Chapel is a good place to start -- homemade soup, friendly people, no pressure.

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How are
religious holidays
observed at Smith?



ANSWER:

The Center works with religious advisers and student groups to organize and plan various religious celebrations and observances on campus each year. We also connect students to nearby communities which can better meet specific students' needs and preferences.

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Are religious services offered on campus?



ANSWER:

Our student body is very diverse and has many different religious orientations. Some groups hold services and bible studies weekly, others meet only occasionally as fits their practice and interest. We frequently meet personally with students to match them to an on-campus group or local community. There's more information at www.smith.edu/religiouslife.

Religion is an important value for my family. Will college make me less religious?

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ANSWER:

We understand that religious practice and a faith community help some students adjust to college. While many students view college as a “break” from their home practices, research on spiritual development shows that students with a strong religious identity, maintain that strong connection – even if religion isn’t a big part of their on-campus experience.

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How can
I stay connected
to my tradition?



ANSWER:

A liberal arts education gives a student tools to ask deeper questions and find new and unexpected answers. Some students stay connected to their tradition by studying them (say in an Islamic studies or C.S. Lewis course). Others stay connected by singing them (e.g. performing Bach's B major mass or singing with Sacred Harp). Others stay connected through family.

How does the **10**
Center for Religious
and Spiritual Life
support students' faith
and religious practice?



ANSWER:

Center staff and Smith religious advisers build personal relationships with students. They have events, services, conversations, field trips, and other activities that connect students to their own traditions and create opportunities for interfaith cooperation and understanding.

Are there any
student organizations
that support
religious identity?

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ANSWER:

Smith's many student religious organizations are open to all Smithies – even if you're just curious. Check the Smith Social Network or the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life's Facebook page.

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I'm not religious.
Where do I fit in?



ANSWER:

You are not alone! Many students fall into the category, we like to call, SWANs (Students Wary And/or Neutral) on the subject of religion, a term coined by Aine Sweetnam '13. Students are always welcome to come to any of our programs, meet with our staff, or just hang out.

The Center for Religious and Spiritual Life is a Center of diverse cultural and religious learning and expression, spiritual development, hospitality, and community engagement. We aim to increase student knowledge of and engagement with intersections of religion, world affairs, and social justice, and to provide support and guidance to students as they wrestle with questions of meaning, faith, and purpose.

“Students coming to campus today are a diverse group ethnically, socio-economically, religiously, and politically. While they have high ambitions and aspirations for educational and occupational success, and college is the means by which they believe they can realize their goals, they are also actively dealing with existential questions. They are searching for deeper meaning in their lives, looking for ways

to cultivate their inner selves, seeking to be compassionate and charitable, and determining what they think and feel about the many issues confronting their society and the global community.”

- Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose, 2003

Our Center Offers:

- Opportunities for Spiritual Practice
- Spirituality in Action (Student Advisory Board)
- Community Service
- Religious Diversity Training
- Ethical Reflection

- One-on-One Guidance and Pastoral Care
- Student-led discussions
- Social Justice Opportunities
- Religious Services

Contact us at www.smith.edu/religiouslife
or like us on Facebook

Smith College
Center for Religious and Spiritual Life

413-585-2753 or 413-585-2754



SMITH COLLEGE

