







	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
						
<b>Followers Worldwide</b> (estimated 2001 figures)	362 million	2 billion	820 million	1.2 billion	14.5 million	6.3 million
<b>Name of Deity</b>	The Buddha did not teach a personal deity.	God	Three main gods: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva	God (Allah)	God (Yahweh)	Confucius (viewed by many as a god)
<b>Founder</b>	The Buddha	Jesus Christ	No one founder	Muhammad	Abraham	Confucius
<b>Holy Book</b>	No one book—sacred texts, including the <i>Dhammapada</i>	Bible	No one book—sacred texts, including the Vedas, the Puranas	Qur'an	Hebrew Bible, including the Torah	the <i>Analects</i> , the Five Classics
<b>Leadership</b>	Buddhist monks and nuns	Priests, ministers, monks, and nuns	Guru, holy man, Brahmin priest	No clergy but a scholar class called the ulama and the imam, who may lead prayers	Rabbis	No clergy
<b>Basic Beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons achieve complete peace and happiness (nirvana) by eliminating their attachment to worldly things.</li> <li>Nirvana is reached by following the Noble Eightfold Path: Right views; Right resolve; Right speech; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right effort; Right mindfulness; Right concentration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>Jesus Christ was the son of God. He died to save humanity from sin. His death and resurrection made eternal life possible for others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The soul never dies, but is continually reborn.</li> <li>Persons achieve happiness and enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires.</li> <li>Freedom from earthly desires comes from a lifetime of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons achieve salvation by following the Five Pillars of Islam and living a just life. These pillars are: faith; prayer; almsgiving, or charity to the poor; fasting, which Muslims perform during Ramadan; pilgrimage to Mecca.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>God loves and protects his people, but also holds people accountable for their sins and shortcomings.</li> <li>Persons serve God by studying the Torah and living by its teachings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on strong family relationships.</li> <li>Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society.</li> <li>Education is important both to the welfare of the individual and to society.</li> </ul>