

FAITH IN



YOURSELF!

Mini Edition



A space to explore what it's like to be LGBT+ and have religion, faith or belief.

Faith In Yourself mini holds a selection of stories and advice from LGBT+ people of faith of all ages and backgrounds.



WHAT IS RELIGION, FAITH AND BELIEF?



Religion, faith and belief mean different things to different people. We asked young people what the words mean to them:

GUIDANCE
A WAY OF LIFE
SECURITY
FAMILY BELONGING
HOPE
TOLERANCE
ACCEPTANCE
LOVE
CONSCIOUSNESS FOR OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD
UNDERSTANDING
UNITY
DISCIPLINE
FAITH
CHALLENGE
COLLECTIVE
TRUSTING GOD
COMMUNITY
RESPONSIBILITY
PEACE
INDIVIDUAL
MORALS
PURPOSE



LGBT...?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

→ Lesbian:

A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women.

→ Gay:

A person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.

→ Bisexual:

An individual who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of their own gender and different genders.

→ Trans:

An umbrella term describing a person's gender identity that does not necessarily match their sex given at birth.

There are lots and lots of identities, check out the Coming Out page on our website for an even bigger list!

CAN LGBT+ AND FAITH IDENTITIES CO-EXIST?



CAN I BE LGBT+ AND A PERSON OF FAITH, RELIGION OR BELIEF?



We have so many parts to who we are that make us whole and when one or more of our identities seem to clash or be in opposition, it can feel like we have to choose between them.

Which one is a bigger part of me?

Which is more important?

Which do I identify with the most?

Questions like this can feel impossible to answer and they are questions we shouldn't have to answer either.

“...Your sexuality is not a detached element of yourself. It's you. Love and embrace it. It's okay to have faith and be LGBT!”
(Queer, Christian, age 25)



Imagine a red rose. Its petals are bright red. When you sniff it, it smells fresh and floral. When you touch it, it feels cool and delicate.



One way of thinking about our own identity is like the rose. We have many different aspects, just like the redness, the scent, and the feel of the rose. But none of those aspects can be separated from the rose. Perhaps that's why it can feel so uncomfortable, or even painful, when we try to hide some of those things in certain places.



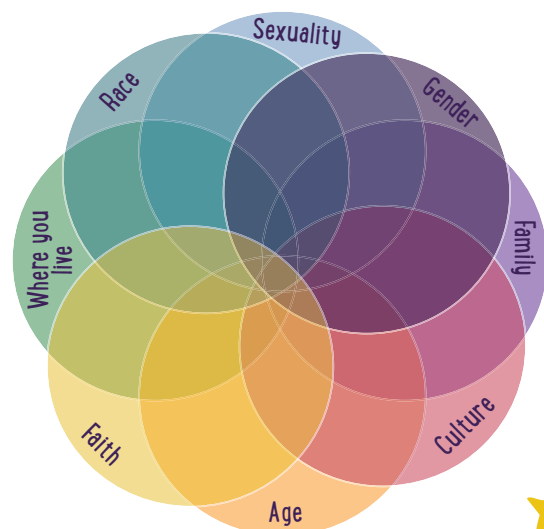
“Holy scriptures are open to interpretation and can work in harmony. You shouldn't have to choose bits of yourself.”

(young person, Loreto College)



“I have heard that God has known me before I was even born, my queerness is not news to him; being my whole, authentic self is vital to being in relationship with God; I am wholly and fully loved, unconditionally.”

(Black, gay woman, Christian, age 35)



BEING LGBT+ PEOPLE OF FAITH

“I thought I had to choose my faith or my sexuality, so it only seemed right to either dedicate myself fully to Christianity or leave it behind entirely. It wasn't until college that I figured out I could leave the institution of Christianity behind, but still have faith in the teachings of Jesus. Your beliefs should never leave you ashamed of who you are naturally. The way you were made is perfect and good. If what you believe in now doesn't sit right with you or makes you uncomfortable, change it.”

(Lesbian, Zimbabwean, age 21)

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

“When I realised that there were other Muslim LGBT+ folk out there, it meant the world, because I realised I wasn't alone...You're not alone, and you'll find your place amongst people who are just like you.”

(Bisexual, Muslim, age 23)

“As a bisexual Roman Catholic, I have been accepted by my family and church. There is always someone who understands your journey.”

(Young person of faith, Loreto College)

HANG IN THERE

“Although there have been really tough times, by accepting that all parts of me – even my sexuality – reflect the image of God, I have begun to feel so much more alive and whole.”

(Cis, queer, Christian, age 21)

OUR LGBT+ ALLIES TOLD US

“You don't have to do anything to earn God's love.”

“Follow your heart and don't let anyone tell you who you have to be.”

“We are an ummah (community) no matter what, we should always have each others backs.”

“When I first came out I was very young, 13 years old, and came out to my Hindu parents. My father was absolutely amazing about it and accepted me straight away, but my mother did initially struggle with accepting me. She never told me she didn't accept me, but was quiet about things. I think she was scared what the Hindu community would say. But when I was 19, out of the blue she said she fully accepted me now, which was beautiful.”

(Gay female, Buddhist, age 31)

EXPLORE YOUR FAITH

“I felt God made a mistake by making me gay, but I realised later that it was my church, not God, that was homophobic.”

(Christian young person, The Proud Trust)

“There are so many ways to believe and be part of your tradition. Your faith and beliefs will always be personal to you. They are fluid and may grow and develop as you do. It's important to give space to your personal beliefs and not just what others in your tradition say.”

(Trans, Christian, age 26)



Remember to trust yourself and if you feel lost – reach out! There are lots of people and organisations out there who understand and who can listen and help. There are also lots of people who will see, accept and celebrate you in all that you are. You really are not alone.

Contact the youth workers who wrote this guide or The Proud Trust for anything else that's on your mind

info@theproudsttrust.org | 0161 660 3347

or via our Facebook, Twitter and
Instagram pages @theproudsttrust



Check out the Faith section on our website to explore in more depth what it means to be LGBT+ and half a religion, faith or belief! There you will find lots more stories, information and advice too.

[theproudsttrust.org/for-young-people/
faith-and-culture](https://theproudsttrust.org/for-young-people/faith-and-culture)

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