

Religiosity Hand and Easter Story

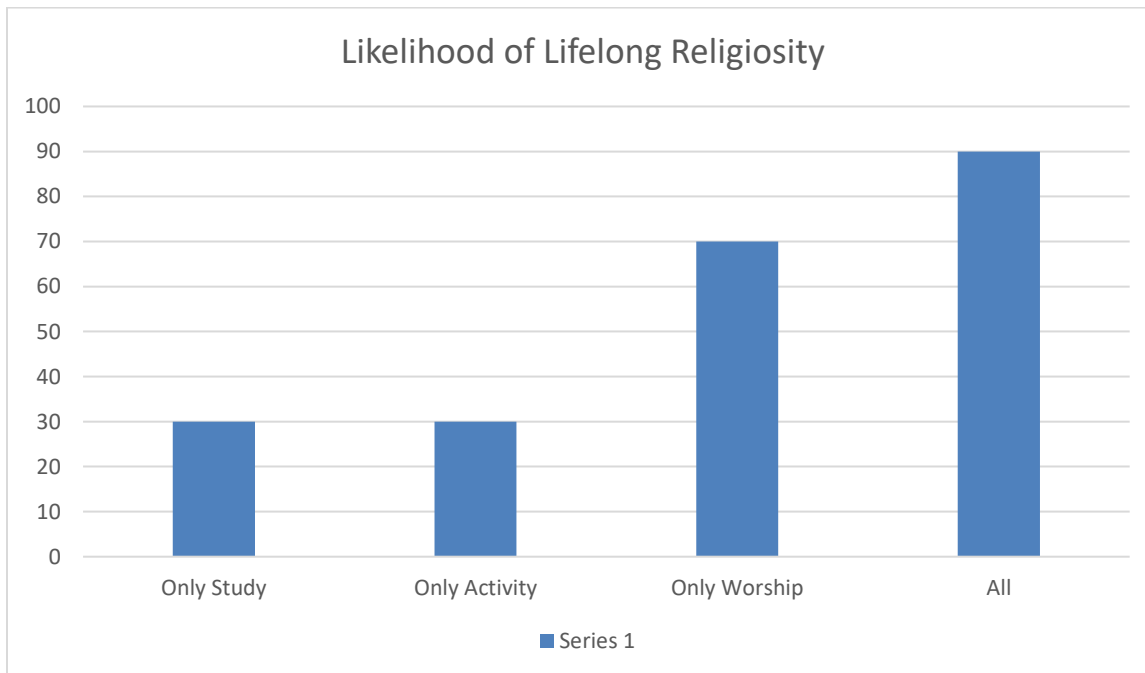
Need

- Bibles
- blank paper and crayons or colored pencils or markers
- Copies of religiosity hand
 - o on handouts include url for denomination/religion selectors
 - o <http://www.selectsmart.com/FREE/select.php?client=christiandenom>
 - o <http://www.selectsmart.com/RELIGION/>

An interesting article to read in preparation:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3208480/>

0925-0930 Set up paper and handouts and crayons and BIBLES on table. Draw a hand on whiteboard. Write on board Theory of children 30% 30% 70% 90%. Write URLs on board and invite 1 person to work on the denominational quiz as the class goes on. If you have a squeeze ball to play with while you present, it reinforces the message.



0930-0935

Prayer & introduction of speaker

0935-0940

We will return to it in a moment, but on the board you will see a graph with approximate results from a longitudinal study from Australia. We will talk about this more later, but it shows the likelihood of lifelong religiosity.

We are going to look at the gospel Easter story through the lens of studies on religiosity. We are going to focus on the first people who encountered the empty tomb and resurrected Jesus.

Religiosity is the joining of all 5 aspects of your spiritual-religious life. It is thought, feeling, reliance, and actions.

- Open your Bibles to Mark 16:1-8, and keep it propped open during the class.

0940-0945

As Ruth pointed out, the cross and empty tomb are most important parts of Christian religion. How do you measure whether a person really holds to the Christian religion? Or to whatever religion they claim?

You can SAY you belong/believe/pray, but what do I know?

I am a religious educator and researcher. In my world I have to show using NUMBERS that the money invested in religious activities is making a difference.

0945-0950

Trace your hand. If you want, then you can help each other.

The religiosity hand is an illustration that I developed to talk about the pieces of a person's faith. Trade crayon colors to be ready for the next part of your project. You will trade crayons after each time you write.

0945-0950

You will each only need 1 hand. Rodney Stark, a sociologist of religion, outlined 5 characteristics of religiosity. These are the behaviors that make up a religion. 3 are measurable, and 2 are essentially invisible. I have taken these 5 and put them into a diagram of a hand. We cannot measure belief /reliance. People can fake or misrepresent what they rely upon, but we can measure certain behaviors.

As we celebrate Easter, we think about our Christian religion. In this lesson, we are looking at the behavior of Jesus' followers on Easter Sunday and following. By looking at their behavior, we understand the Christian religion and understand individual religious behavior.

0950-0955

Let's look at verse 1. The first facet of religiosity is public behavior. Write the word PUBLIC PIETY on your THUMB. Piety means reverent practices, things that are identified as visibly religious. What was the Public Piety – visible – behavior that we see from the disciples? (They observed the Sabbath. They did not do the anointing on Saturday. The Jewish religious tradition still puts a BIG deal on what you do not do on a Sabbath. We know something about the disciples by these visible behaviors. They were observantly Jewish.) What are the public behaviors that might be part of a Christian? (Sunday worship, Sunday School, order of worship, style of Cross you display?)

Trade crayon colors.

0955-1000

Let's continue looking at Mark 16:1. In last week's lesson, Jerry pointed out that BURIAL is important. There are very few burials of crucified people. Most crucified bodies were left on the cross. The burial of Friday night and the time in the tomb of Saturday is important to understand the atonement of the resurrection. Today we are celebrating Easter and learning more about our own religious practice. The second facet – write this on your POINTER finger – is Knowledge of the selected public piety and. These women showed, and they anointed of the body. They

knew Old Testament requirements on the treatment of the body. I am classifying the anointing as Knowledge because this shows that they know the requirements AND because this was a private act as opposed to a visible activity like going to synagogue. Not many people go back and check the correct anointing practices. What are the points of your Christian belief that are important? (Presbyterian ordination includes a Bible Content exam! We will not outline the key beliefs of Christian religion here, but those are what we are looking for.) Knowledge matters. As an aside, it is interesting to know that American religious literacy rate (the knowledge that the average person has of their chosen religion and its scriptures) is lower in 2018 than in 1998. Trade crayon colors.

1000-1005

Skip ahead to Mark 16:6. These people were not just from the Jewish religion, but they were also of the emerging sect – “The Way,” the people who followed THIS Rabbi Jesus. The middle finger (yes this is where the hand gets unfortunate) is where you mark the words DENOMINATION/RELIGION. Part of Religiosity, is claiming a religious tradition. What is the religious group that you claim? (Christian, Presbyterian)

If you would like to see how your selected denomination/religion, matches with your pointer finger – what you know about your beliefs – have a little fun with these Assessment websites – one has you answer questions to help you see what RELIGION your beliefs might actually match to. The other assessment moves from an assumption that you have claimed Christianity and helps you think which Christian denomination your knowledge might best fit with. The implication of your matching your knowledge and your selected religious group is an opportunity to do self-reflection and Christian Education to learn more about what Presbyterians believe and what you believe. As I have used these assessments, I have found plenty of people who claim one religion but whose knowledge matches a different.

Remember this diagram is descriptive. It is the start of conversations. The assessments and this hand diagram both are helpful in figuring out what you want to study next (individually or as a class).

Trade crayon colors.

1005-1010

Read Mark 16:8. Because we are doing our order from the Easter story, we skip over to our pinky finger. Label your pinky with ETHIC. This are your daily behaviors. If you are working, then this is your Monday Morning behavior. Ethic is what you do as a person beyond your religious practice. What did the disciples do? (They fled. They were not perfect, and somehow this is a comfort to me.) Your daily work and actions are a reflection of your belief and your public worship. We can measure this, but it is hard to see how it is religious – except that sociologists have extensively studied and shown that how you behave comes from what you believe and the group you worship with. What are some of your daily ethical decisions that come with/from your public piety, your knowledge, and your religion/denomination?

Helpful books that I recommend as you think about ethic are CS Lewis’ Four Loves and Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Trade crayon colors.

1010-1015

Finally, the part that we cannot measure and really do not see explicitly in Jesus' followers on Easter. Label your RING FINGER with your Private Piety. These are the actions which are between you and God. What are some examples? (silent prayer, thoughts about God) This is what many people call SPIRITUALITY, it is tough to quantify, but you can see how it fits with the other facets of religiosity. Private Piety is what people are usually talking about when they think about religion and spirituality.

1015-1020

Distribute handouts.

Stark showed that where 1 facet grows and changes, then the other 4 grow and change as well. The Religiosity Hand can help you examine your personal life and in your conversations with people of other religions. It might help you think about what you need to look at more as a class and as individuals.

Ethic, knowledge, and public piety are measurable.

Many people say, "I am spiritual, not religious." When you talk with them, you will hear that what they are describing are the 3 interior parts of religiosity (Private Piety, Belief/Reliance, and Knowledge).

- It could be that by talking spirituality, then they are actually claiming a particular religion. There are some religious groups which are more focused on these activities more than on Ethic or Public Piety.
- The assessment websites can help you as you think about these things. This is a whole other class.

1020-1025

Return to theory of children and worship. What do you understand about the Australian study results as a result of the Religiosity Hand?

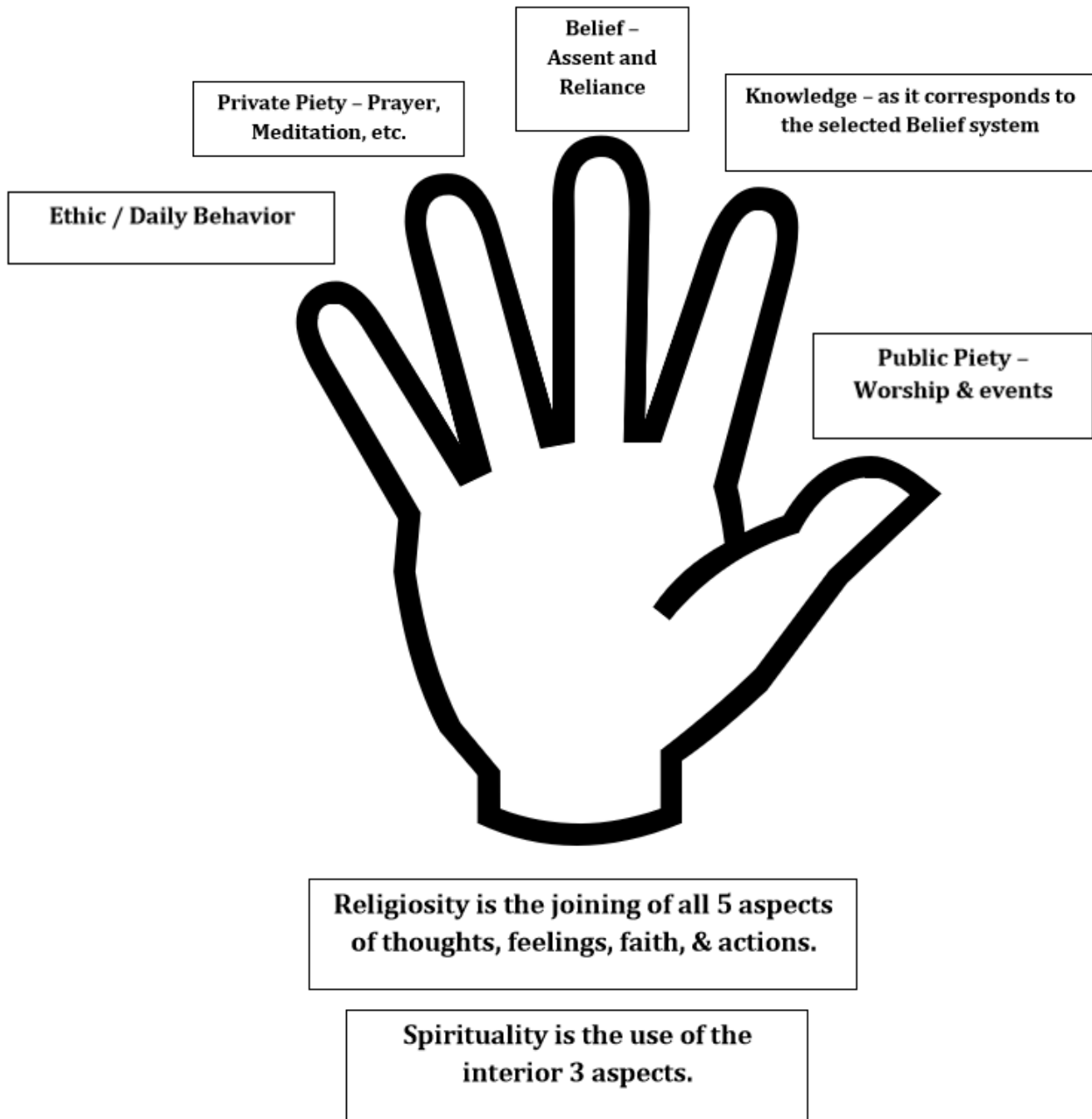
If we had more time, we would take turns playing with the websites and doing the same exercise about John chapter 20 resurrection account. If anyone did an online assessment, then they could talk their results now.

Close in prayer for our own religiosity and our role as leaders in Christian faith and in this congregation.

1025-1030

Leave

Spirituality as a Subset of Religiosity Based on Dr. Rodney Stark



Model created by Dr. Becky Powell.
September 2011

<http://www.selectsmart.com/FREE/select.php?client=christiandenom>
<http://www.selectsmart.com/RELIGION/>