



# Keeping track of Religious Holidays



Have you ever scheduled a campout over a religious holiday? I have. It really doesn't matter which religion you offend, knowingly or unknowingly, the result is the same – you've offended someone who is practicing one of the basic tenants of scouting – Duty to God. We must strive to be aware of the faith of our scouts and to support their efforts, observances and holidays as appropriate. And not being aware of these events is simply not "doing our best." (To borrow from a Cub Scout Motto.)

Virtually every major religion is represented in the Boy Scouts of America, from Catholics and Protestants, to the Armenian Church of America and Zoroastrians. Keeping track of all of these may be next to impossible, but keeping track of the Major religions, and the specific religions that may be represented within our Pack/Troop/Crew is entirely within our power. Since differing religions use different calendars, many religious holidays change their dates every US calendar year. If you are looking for ways to keep them straight – here are 2 methods:

## Method 1 – Finding the information –

Simply knowing how to find information on various religions can be a major undertaking. Since observances can differ greatly from one year to the next on our calendar, it is impossible to simply keep a list of important dates. These important dates change every year. Fortunately, many others have mapped these dates out for us. One of the best places to find these dates for the next 10 years is at [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org).

## Method 2 – Putting religious observances into your OUTLOOK calendar

The most common email / contact / calendaring system in the world is Microsoft Outlook. So if you are using this tool for your calendaring, congratulations! You are using a tool with many of the major religious holidays built in!

Microsoft Outlook has a built-in feature to add holidays from different countries and religions to your default Calendar folder. For Microsoft 2003 and 2007 you can add holidays to your Calendar by following these steps:

1. Choose Tools | Options, then click Calendar Options.
2. On the Calendar Options dialog box, click Add Holidays.
3. In the Add Holidays to Calendar dialog box, check the countries or religions whose holidays you want to add, then click OK.

On the next page, you will find the major religious dates for the next 9 months. This should give you an idea of the challenges you may be faced with planning events while being sensitive to multiple faiths.

## Top Religions of the World

1. Christianity: 2.1 billion
2. Islam: 1.5 billion
3. Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist: 1.1 billion
4. Hinduism: 900 million
5. Chinese traditional religion: 394 million
6. Buddhism: 376 million
7. primal-indigenous: 300 million
8. African Traditional & Diasporic: 100 million
9. Sikhism: 23 million
10. Juche: 19 million
11. Spiritism: 15 million
12. Judaism: 14 million
13. Baha'i: 7 million
14. Jainism: 4.2 million
15. Shinto: 4 million

As an example of the challenges of planning around religious holidays, here are the major events for the next 9 months:

<p><b>FEBRUARY 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 Four Chaplains Sunday - Interfaith USA</li> <li>* 2 Candlemas - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Presentation of Christ in the Temple -</li> <li>o Imbolc * - Wicca Northern hemisphere</li> <li>o Lughnassad * - Wicca Southern hemisphere</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 3 o Setsubun sai - Shinto</li> <li>* 8 o Triodion begins - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 9 o Tu B'shvat * - Jewish</li> <li>* 14 o Saint Valentine's Day - Christian</li> <li>* 15 o Nirvana Day ** - Buddhism</li> <li>* 21 o Saturday of Souls - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 22 o Transfiguration Sunday - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Meatfare Sunday - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 23 o Maha Shivaratri ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 24 o Saint Matthew's Day - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Shrove Tuesday - Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 25 o Ash Wednesday - Lent begins - Christian</li> <li>* 26 o Intercalary Days begin * Baha'i</li> </ul>	<p><b>MAY 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 o Beltane * - Wicca Northern               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Samhain * - Wicca Southern</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 2 o Twelfth Day of Ridvan * - Baha'i</li> <li>* 7 o National Day of Prayer (USA) - Interfaith</li> <li>* 9 o Buddha Day - Visakha Puja - Vesak</li> <li>** - Buddhist</li> <li>* 12 o Lag B'Omer * - Jewish</li> <li>* 21 o Ascension of Jesus - Christian</li> <li>* 23 o Declaration of the Bab * - Baha'i</li> <li>* 28 o Ascension of Jesus - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 29-30 o Shavuot * - Jewish</li> <li>* 29 o Ascension of Baha'u'llah * - Baha'i</li> <li>* 31 o Pentecost - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Lag B'Omer - Jewish</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>AUGUST 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 o Lammas - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Fast Day in honor of Holy Mother of Jesus - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 2 o Lughnassad - Wicca Northern hemisphere               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Imbolc* - Wicca Southern hemisphere</li> <li>o Fast in honor of Holy Mother of Lord Jesus - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 5 o Raksha Bandhan ** - Hindu               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Lailat al Bara'ah * - Islam</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 6 o Transfiguration of the Lord - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 14 o Krishna Janmashtami ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 15 o Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary - Catholic Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Dormition of the Theotokos - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 17 o Paryushana ** - Jain</li> <li>* 22 o Ramadan begins * ** - Islam</li> <li>* 23 o Ganesha Chaturthi ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 25 o Assumption of Virgin Mary - Catholic Christian</li> <li>* 29 o Beheading of John the Baptist - Christian</li> </ul>
<p><b>MARCH 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 o Intercalary Days conclude * Baha'i               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Cheesefare Sunday - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>o Four Chaplains Sunday - Christian/Jewish</li> <li>o Saint David of Wales - Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 2 o Lent begins - Clean Monday - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 8 o Orthodox Sunday - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 9 o Mawlid an Nabi * ** - Islam               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Clean Monday - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 10 o Purim * - Jewish</li> <li>* 11 o Holi ** - Hindu               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Hola Mohala - Sikh</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 13 o L. Ron Hubbard birthday - Scientology</li> <li>* 17 o St Patrick's Day - Christian</li> <li>* 21 Vernal Equinox               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Ostara * - Wicca - Northern Hemisphere</li> <li>o Mabon * - Wicca - Southern Hemisphere</li> <li>o Norouz (New Year) - Persian/Zoroastrian</li> <li>o Naw Ruz (New Year) - Baha'i</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 25 o Annunciation of Virgin Mary - Christian</li> <li>* 26 o Khordad Sal - Zoroastrian</li> <li>* 27 o New Year ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 29 o Passion Sunday ** - Christian</li> </ul>	<p><b>JUNE 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7 o Trinity - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Pentecost - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 11 o Corpus Christi - Catholic Christian</li> <li>* 9 o Saint Columba of Iona - Celtic Christian</li> <li>* 14 o All Saints - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 16 o Guru Arjan Dev Martyrdom - Sikh Christian</li> <li>* 19 o Sacred Heart of Jesus - Catholic Christian</li> <li>* 21 Summer Solstice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Litha * - Wicca Northern Hemisphere</li> <li>o Yule * - Wicca Southern Hemisphere</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 24 o Saint John the Baptist Birth - Christian</li> <li>* 29 o Saints Peter and Paul - Christian</li> </ul>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1 o Ecclesiastical Year begins - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 8 o Nativity of Mary - Christian</li> <li>* 14 o Elevation of the Life Giving Cross - Christian</li> <li>* 16 o Lailat al Kadr * ** - Islam</li> <li>* 19-20 o Rosh Hashanah * - Jewish</li> <li>* 19-27 o Navaratri ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 20 o Eid al Fitr * ** - Ramadan ends - Islam</li> <li>* 22 Autumnal Equinox               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mabon * - Wicca Northern Hemisphere</li> <li>o Ostara * - Wicca Southern Hemisphere</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 27 o Meskel - Ethiopian/Eritrean Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 28 o Yom Kippur * - Jewish               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Dasera ** - Hindu</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 29 o Michael and All Angels - Christian</li> </ul>
<p><b>APRIL 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3 o Ramanavami ** - Hindu</li> <li>* 5 o Palm Sunday - Christian</li> <li>* 7 o Mahavir Jayanti ** - Jain</li> <li>* 9-10 o Pesach (Passover) first two days</li> <li>* 9-12 o Theravadin New Year ** - Buddhist               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Lord's Evening Meal - Jehovah's Witness</li> <li>o Maundy Thursday - Christian</li> <li>o Hanuman Jayanti - Hindu</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 10 o Good Friday - Christian</li> <li>* 12 o Easter - Christian               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Palm Sunday - Orthodox Christian</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 13 o Easter Monday Christian</li> <li>* 14 o Baisakhi - Sikh</li> <li>* 15-16 o Pesach (Passover) final two days</li> <li>* 17 o Holy Friday - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 18 o Lazarus Saturday - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 19 o Easter/Pascha - Orthodox Christian</li> <li>* 21 o Yom HaSho'ah * - Jewish               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o First Day of Ridvan * - Baha'i</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 23 o Saint George's Day - Christian</li> <li>* 29 o Yom Ha'Atzmaut * - Jewish               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Ninth Day of Ridvan * - Baha'i</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 30 o St. James the Great Day - Orthodox</li> </ul>	<p><b>JULY 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 7 o Asalha Puja Day ** Buddhist</li> <li>* 9 o Martyrdom of the Bab * - Baha'i</li> <li>* 11 o St Benedict Day - Catholic Christian</li> <li>* 13 o Ulambana (Obon) ** Buddhist</li> <li>* 15 o Saint Vladimir's Day - Christian</li> <li>* 19 o Lailat al Miraj * ** - Islam</li> <li>* 23 o Haile Selassie I birthday - Rastafari</li> <li>* 24 o Pioneer Day- Mormon Christian</li> <li>* 25 o St. James the Great Day - Christian</li> <li>* 30 o Tisha B'Av * - Jewish</li> </ul>	<p><b>OCTOBER 2009</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 3-9 (3-4 Primary Obligation Days)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sukkot * - Jewish</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 4 o St Francis Day - Catholic Christian</li> <li>* 10 o Shemini Atzeret * - Jewish</li> <li>* 11 o Simchat Torah * - Jewish</li> <li>* 12 o Thanksgiving - Interfaith - Canada</li> <li>* 17 o Diwali (Deepavali) ** - Hindu, Jain</li> <li>* 20 o Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth - Sikh               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Birth of the Bab - Baha'i</li> </ul> </li> <li>* 25 o Reformation Day - Protestant Christian</li> <li>* 28 o Milvian Bridge Day - Christian</li> <li>* 31 o All Hallows Eve - Christian</li> </ul>