

Religious Access for Young People

Staying Connected to Cultural, Religious, and Community Activities

When young people stay connected to their cultural, religious, and community activities, it provides them with an indirect connection to their family, even when they are outside of their family home and at a JR facility (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2012). In addition to the support it provides, Freedom of expression and religion is part of each young persons' First Amendment right.



“ There is no bigger part of my personality than my faith. It is the deepest part of myself, and connection to my community. ”

- Anonymous JR Young Person

Supporting Young People

JR continues to partner with faith communities around their facilities to support the young people in their spiritual, religious, or cultural journey.

What Kinds of Religion or Spiritual Practices?

There are all kinds of religious, spiritual, and cultural expressions across the JR population. Some of the known or most common expressions are:

- **Christian, including:**
 - Protestant
 - Catholic
 - Jehovah's Witness
- **Jewish**
- **Messianic Jew**
- **Muslim**
- **The many traditions of Native Americans**

What Does it Look Like?

Each facility in JR looks different, and the support of the young people it serves. Some may hold services and events for young people across campus, in their unit, or Community Facility. Some community members come to a JR facility, or join virtually, to connect and hold services for young people. Young people might come together for a study group or hold a celebration.

For those residing in a Community Facility, they may go to a local church, mosque, synagogue, chapel, temple, community center, or other building or event nearby. The Native American young people may attend a sweat lodge. Some young people may fast and pray during certain times of the year.

Each person has the right to religious items such as spiritual books, religious symbols, prayer mats, head coverings, and other approved religious items.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Green Hill Youth Advisory Council

Most recently, Green Hill School Religious Coordinator Terri Stewart formed a resident-led Spiritual Ethical Religious Value (SERV) Advisory Council that meets weekly. The young people bring forth ideas and suggestions about how to expand support and are developing a calendar of holy days and celebrations.

Where Can I Find More Information?

If you have any questions, please reach out to the facility leadership to learn about the options available at that facility. You can also email **DCYF.GHSReligiousCoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov** for additional ideas about how to support young people in their religious and spiritual exploration and expression.

Interested in Volunteering?

We are always looking for volunteers of all denominations to support young people. JR is committed to ensuring young people have access to all religions and spiritual practices. Contact your nearest JR facility and find out how.



Young people participate in virtual religious learning with volunteers.

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