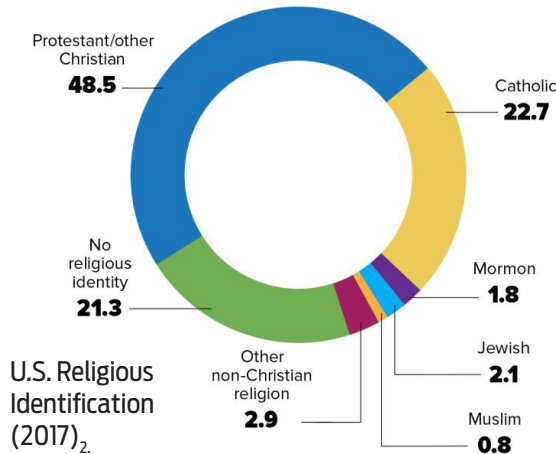


Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas?

Late November to early January is a festive time in our communities, filled with dozens of celebrations from many faiths, cultures and traditions. Some of the more well-known celebrations are Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year's Day. Others include Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, Yule, Epiphany, Boxing Day, and Festivus. By looking at someone we may not be able to tell what celebrations they observe, so in the spirit of respect and recognizing others' beliefs, "Happy Holidays" has grown to be a popular holiday salutation.

"Happy Holidays" is an inclusive greeting and is not intended as an attack on any religion. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of the diversity of beliefs and celebrations, including Christmas. Opponents of the greeting generally claim it is intended to de-emphasize Christmas or even replace it entirely. Actually, the phrase attempts to ensure that every member of our communities feels included and emphasizes that all of our beliefs and traditions are important.



If you know someone celebrates Christmas, there is no harm in saying, "Merry Christmas." If you are uncertain of what someone celebrates, using "Happy Holidays" is an inclusive way of wishing someone well and showing that you respect and value whatever tradition they observe. What matters is the sentiment, not the specific holiday they celebrate.

November 25th - Thanksgiving
 November 29th* -
 December 6th: Hanukkah



December 6th:
 Saint Nicholas Day

December 21st:
 Winter Solstice
 December 21st -
 January 1st: Yule
 December 23rd: Festivus



December 25th: Christmas

December 26th:
 The Feast of St. Stephen

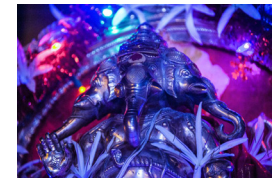
December 29th:
 Chaharshanbe Suri (last
 Wednesday of the year)



January 1st:
 New Year's Day
 January 7th:
 Orthodox Christmas

November 28th -
 December 24th: Advent
 November 30th:
 Feast of St. Andrew

December 8th: Bodhi Day



December 21st - 25th:
 Pancha Ganapati

December 24th:
 Christmas Eve

December 25th - January 5th:
 Twelve Days of Christmas
 (Twelvetide)

December 26th: Boxing Day

December 26th -
 January 1st: Kwanzaa



December 31st:
 New Year's Eve

January 6th:
 Feast of the Epiphany

...and many more

Holidays marked * begin the prior evening.

