

## Religion

Switzerland has a Christian tradition. Today, many members of other religious groups also call Switzerland home. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in Switzerland and public schools are neutral in religion.

### Religion and State

Switzerland has been traditionally influenced by the Christian religion. The cantons determine the relationship between religion and state. Like most German-speaking cantons, Canton Basel-Stadt recognises some religious organisations as public institutions. In effect, the state grants them certain rights, such as to collect taxes from their members. The following religious organisations are recognised under public law in Canton Basel-Stadt: the Evangelical Reformed Church, the Roman-Catholic Church, the Christian Catholic Church and the Israelite Community. A number of other communities are recognised at the cantonal level. These are organised under private law.

### Religious Groups in Canton Basel-Stadt

Around a third of Basel's population are members of one of the four communities recognised under public law. In addition, there are many other religious communities, such as Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or more contemporary movements. Around half of the population do not belong to a religious group.

### Freedom of Religion

The Swiss constitution guarantees religious freedom. This means that everybody has a right to decide on their religious beliefs themselves. Everybody has the right to express and pass on these beliefs. Nobody can force others to join a religious group or participate in religious acts. People may gather to practise religious rituals and celebrations. People may not be discriminated against on the basis of their religion or faith.

## **Religion and School**

Compulsory schooling is neutral in religion. However, religious issues still form part of education. The subject "Nature, People, Society" is taught in primary education. It covers different ways of life and cultures. There are also denominational religious classes that children can participate in voluntarily. The subject "Ethics, Religions, Society" is taught in secondary education and is compulsory. Here, school pupils learn important skills that they need for living with different cultures, religions, ideologies and value systems. Religious communities may also offer classes outside of school for children of other faiths.

## **Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)**

[www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/canton-basel-stadt/religion](http://www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/canton-basel-stadt/religion)