

“God Talk” checklist

In our society, many people equate God and religion, so one good place to start explaining your religious identity is to think about where you stand on the God question. Recognizing that the God question cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, this checklist is designed to get you thinking with some degree of precision about where you stand on the God question.

The checklist offers a wide variety of theological options, from feminist theology to liberation theology to atheism to deism to very traditional Christianity to classical Unitarianism to classical Universalism to panentheism to pantheism to religious humanism—and more. The checklist is not designed to push you towards either belief or non-belief, nor to force you to take sides in a dichotomy between belief and non-belief; rather, the checklist is supposed to provoke interesting thought and conversation.

Part I

Check any that are true for you. If you circle something, you’re not saying that’s something you actually believe, you’re just saying that you could not possibly conceive of believing in God if that statement were true.

Personally, I *cannot* believe in God if:

- if I have to believe that God is some guy with a white beard in the clouds
- if I have to believe that God can send people to hell after they die
- if I have to believe that God is three different beings all crammed into one being
- if I’m supposed to believe things that are just plain irrational or unreasonable
- if I have to believe that God is all-powerful, and yet still lets innocent children get hurt
- if I have to believe that God is pure goodness, and yet there is so much evil and hatred in the world
- if I have to believe that God is all-knowing, and yet God has not told us how to make the world a perfect place

Part II

Circle any that are true for you. If you circle something, you’re not saying that’s what you actually believe—you’re just saying that you could conceive of believing in God if that statement were true.

Personally, I *could* believe in God if:

- if God were a man with a white beard sitting on a cloud
- if God were a woman
- if God were something that gave me inner strength when I needed it
- if God personally answered all my prayers
- if God were the same thing as the scientific laws that run the universe
- if God preferred poor people, rather than people with enough to eat
- if God were Nature, animals and plants and everything else in the natural world
- if God included everything in the universe: all people, all animals, all the stars, everything
- if the word “God” really meant the highest and best of humanity
- if God means the same thing as love

Part III

1. Do you believe in God?

Yes (theist)

No (atheist)

Maybe (possibilitarian?)

Don't know (agnostic)

Don't care ("apatheist")

None of the above (postmodernist?)

All of the above (refuse to be pigeonholed?)

2. In two or three sentences...

a. if you checked either "Yes" or "No," describe the God you do or do not believe in.

b. if you checked "Maybe", describe both the God you can not believe in, and a God that you maybe could believe in if you thought it were true.

c. if you checked "Don't care" or "Don't know", describe what you think is the most important thing in the universe.

d. if you checked "None of the above" or "All of the above", explain why.