



by senior Abby Lashbrook

In my opinion, faith is a journey— a journey that is filled with success and failure, comfort and guilt, happiness and sadness, but ultimately, love.

For those times when I feel alone or helpless, faith brings me hope for better days. It is about celebrating the good, learning from the bad, and never being alone.

My journey of faith began during childhood. When I was younger, I didn't go to church. In my household, Sundays were football days, not church days.

I believed in God and prayed every once in a while, but whenever people would mention the Bible, I was clueless.

But, as I matured, I found the value of a more serious relationship with God and the faith that comes with it. Faith became a reassurance. I learned I could always turn to Him for help. He will always be constant in my life, and I know He will never abandon me.

Our relationship, though it's stronger, is

not perfect because I'm not perfect. Sure, there have been ups and downs in my personal journey, but regardless, if I'm on a mountaintop or in the valley, I put my trust in Him.

I know of my sins, of my guilt, and of my wrongs. But I also know that I am forgiven, and I am loved. In His eyes, I will never be too broken, too damaged, or too unlovable. No matter what happens, He will always accept me.

Faith is freedom— freedom to believe whatever you choose to but also freedom to believe in yourself. Today, we live in a world where people want to push that one religion is considered "right" but doesn't that mean that the others are "wrong"?

Instead of discriminating against others' religions, we should respect and celebrate them. Perhaps we should obsess less about our differences and celebrate that which we have in common— a faith in something greater.

**In His eyes, I will never be broken, damaged, or unlovable.**

**Did You Know?**

**90%** of students share the same religion as their parents



**Junior Abi Henderson**  
Christian

"Religion is not a good way to describe my Christian faith," said junior Abi Henderson. Henderson goes to a church that is considered non-denominational, though it does come from a Baptist background. "I belong to no religion except the Christian faith," said Henderson. "It is better described as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

**"Many people think that church is a place that is unaccepting and full of rules. However, God doesn't care who you are, where you have been, what you have done, or even what has been done to you. He is accepting of all people, from every background. Some people believe this because of the conversations overheard from people that attend different churches."**

- junior Abi Henderson

my sins," said Henderson. She says over the years she has grown in her faith and has developed close relationships with fellow believers.



**Junior Stephanie Prather**  
Lutheran

"Ever since I was young, I have been raised Lutheran," said junior Stephanie Prather. In fact, her ancestors founded a small Lutheran country church in rural Minnesota that is over 100 years old. "As Lutherans, we believe that we don't need to earn our way into Heaven. [We believe] that as long as we believe in Jesus Christ and that He died on the cross for us, then we will be able to go to Heaven," Prather said. "I would describe my beliefs as grace-filled," said Prather. She finds comfort in knowing she will always be forgiven by God. Prather finds His forgiveness extremely rewarding because she knows that if she messes up, she will always be forgiven.

**"The biggest challenge is remembering that if I make a mistake, I'm forgiven. It doesn't matter to God that I make mistakes. Sometimes I think when I mess up that people won't forgive me, but God always forgives, no matter what."**

- junior Stephanie Prather

**36%** of HHS students are Lutheran



**Senior Tyler Staker**  
Atheist

Senior Tyler Staker says that he is an atheist. He explains this not as a religion, but rather a lack of one. "I'd say I haven't chosen to be an atheist, but the facts of life, as well as the many falsities of religion, lead me to it," said Staker. "Unlike the other belief systems, atheism isn't something that is simply chosen or bestowed upon you by your parents. It's a realization that happens if you truly think about our existence and that through human history, religion has, and still is, used to abuse and control people by those with authority." Staker continued, "Realizing that there aren't any higher powers has broken my chains. [It's allowed] me to truly think freely and for myself [and] it's changed my life for the better."

**"A common misconception is that we have no or little morals, which is, of course, incorrect. I don't want or need religion to know how to treat people like they deserve to be treated. The idea of atheism scares people of religion because they either don't try to or aren't able to comprehend an existence without a deity. Too many people aren't open-minded and won't try to perceive life in different ways."**

- senior Tyler Staker



**Senior Zach Buzynski**  
Catholic

Senior Zach Buzynski was raised Catholic and believes that the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church are morally good. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God who, through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, redeemed the world," said Buzynski. "The most rewarding thing about Catholicism for me is that I can receive the amazing gifts of God, such as the Eucharist- forgiveness of sins through confession, baptism, and the confirmation. I can also see myself become a better person through my faith by following the Word of God."

**"The biggest misconception I hear is that we have excruciatingly rigid beliefs. Many people believe all Catholics think the Pope is entirely infallible; however, we only feel that way under specific circumstances. Another misconception is that the Catholic Church opposes science. I embrace scientific discoveries and feel that it strengthens my faith. In fact, a Catholic priest was the first to suggest the Big Bang Theory."**

- senior Zach Buzynski

**10%** of HHS students don't have a faith



Senior Kim Swanson has traveled to Haiti for two summers for 14 days at a time, both in July.

"I've always had a heart for missions. I just knew in my heart that I had to go," said Swanson

While in Haiti, she helped facilitate a Vacation Bible School being held for the kids. She also tutored them in

geography, math, and science. Most people would worry that language would be a barrier that they could not overcome, but for Swanson, that was not an issue.

"Language can be a barrier, but it's not something to worry about," said Swanson. "A smile can go a long way."



When high school math teacher Derek Kimball was in college, he had the opportunity to go to Colorado on a mission trip to work with homeless people and see how hard their life is. It was an eye-opening experience for Kimball, one that he will never forget.

"I think that it helped me to have a compassion for people

that don't have what I have and realize that I'm probably no better than they are," said Kimball.

"It's hard to go on a mission trip and not have your eyes open, not only to the fact that there are people different than you, especially that the people in those situations couldn't help it."



Spring break of his freshman year, sophomore Alex Reynolds and his family took a mission trip to Haiti, where they remodeled houses and entertained the Haitian children.

On his trip, Reynolds learned that the "luxuries" we have here are taken for grant-

ed. "It was a sad yet beautiful experience to see the happiest people in the world living in such a horrific place," said Reynolds. There he learned to appreciate everything he has. Said Reynolds, "I feel so lucky to live the way I live."



graphics courtesy of Piktochart

**Crossing the line**

by sophomore Grace Schwenneker

There is a fine line between believing in something and forcing that belief on others. Unfortunately, that line is crossed a little too often.

Sure, people have a right to be able to praise the God they believe in, but you can't just push your beliefs on others.

When a student or teacher enters a school with the intention of expressing their beliefs without a valid, educational purpose, it has gone too far.

In schools, students should have the right to believe what they want. When a teacher forces students to sing, read, or talk about something they don't believe in, it is not only unfair, but it is also wrong.

Besides, how do you do any of that equitably? A student can sit down in a classroom and the student to the left of him could believe in a certain

god while the student to the right could not even believe in a god. How do you approach that? Easy- you don't.

Religion in a public school cannot be covered equitably. That is exactly why separation of church and state is needed.

**Did you know?**

High school resource teacher Stacey Lyons plans to start a Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Hudson High School in the fall.

Teachers like 7-12 choir teacher Casey Tecklenburg disagree and feel there is a place for religion in schools.

"Music is rooted in sacred tradition that is equal to religion," said Tecklenburg. He understands that students are forced to sing something that they may disagree with, but he addresses it in class.

Tecklenburg said he is exposing them to different religions with the sole purpose of helping his students grow in their knowledge of music.

