**To Believe or not to Believe**

**Belief**- the acceptance of something as true or actual

-Believing involves taking a risk. We need to believe for reasons of:

* Crisis
* Love (especially in times of loneliness)
* Security (support)
* Tradition (parents believe)
* Emotional security (calmness)
* Meaning (purpose)
* Guilt & Fear (Hell)

**Can we prove that there is a God?**

-As Christians we are often called to defend our religious convictions. In some cases, people who do not believe in God are also challenged on their beliefs.

**What is a believer?**

A believer is a person who takes a stand. A person who can believe in God is a believer, but the person who does not believe that God exists can also be called a believer. In a sense, except for the skeptic, who simply does not believe one way or the other, we are all believers.

We can believe that certain religious convictions are true, or that they are not true.

**Atheist-** denies God’s existence

**Agnostic-** neither affirms nor denies (don’t know).

Do you think that it is more difficult to believe that there is a God or there isn’t?

**What is the difference between “knowledge” and “belief”?**

**Knowledge-** refers to things that we can demonstrate to be true, by logical deductions or past experience.

**Beliefs-** are ideas we hold to be true, even though they cannot be proven in a scientific or exact way.

\*The scientific world often considers beliefs unimportant.

It is said that it takes two things to believe:

1. **Conviction-** based on reasoning and courage
2. **Willingness-** to let oneself plunge into the mystery.

We rely on belief for many (if not most) things in our lives.

What are some things that we believe to be true, even though they cannot be proven to be true?

* What we read or others say
* What others believe
* Honesty of a friend
* Love of parents
* Quality of your teachers

\*We use experiences & logical deduction to provide a basis for these beliefs, but not proof.

\*We rely on beliefs many times a day.

**Why is it so difficult for many people to believe in religion?**

It is easier for us to believe provable things, or things which experience and deduction show to be true. (eg. The sun rises everyday, you can make plans for the weekend, honesty of a friend.)

**What is Faith?**

Faith is a free gift from God. You can choose whether or not you will accept it.

**How is faith connected to our religious beliefs?**

Faith gives meaning to our beliefs. Faith is the difference between believing that God exists and believing in that God.

\*You do not need to have a religious denomination to have faith.

**What have you done today that required faith in someone else?**

* Eat
* Ride in a car/bus
* Drink tap water