

Religion is a simple  
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webster's dictionary  
defines religion

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Religion is a simple concept to learn. Webster's dictionary defines religion as: "belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshipped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe." Although it is understood what religion is, not everyone has the same views. There are numerous varieties and sub-varieties of religions. In fact, religion can be so diverse that one might say that he or she is of the same religion as another person but the way he or she demonstrates their beliefs may be dramatically different. In the novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain, writes about a young boy's growing and maturing experiences one summer as he travels down the Mississippi River. One of the things that this boy, Huck Finn, discovers is how religion affects his lifestyle. Huckleberry Finn's views of religion have an impact on many essential points in the episodic novel. Religion has an effect on three of Huck's major decisions throughout the novel. His religion is tested when he first decides to help Jim run away. His religion is tested when he lies to most of the people he meets traveling down the Mississippi River, and Huckleberry's religion is tested when he decides to help Jim escape from slavery for good. Huckleberry Finn was raised without a strong religious influence. Huck's father being a raging alcoholic, and Huck living mostly on his own, were two of the factors that contributed to this. Pap came to visit him one night and expressed his negative thoughts on school and religion. "First you know you'll get religion, too. I never see such a son" (Twain 20). Despite these warnings, the Widow Douglas continued to teach Huck. Later in the novel, these teachings have consequential effects on Huck. Huck's religious morals are first tested when he decides to help the Widow's slave escape to freedom. During the time

that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* took place, slavery was not uncommon. In the beginning of the story, Huck displays similar beliefs as the people that are raising him; blacks are considered property and not people. Huck chooses to help Jim run away despite the fact that he knows that Jim is considered property and helping him would be like stealing. The widow tries to convert Huck to Christianity. She preaches all about heaven, hell, and the things that one should do to get to either place. Huck is not too concerned about either, obviously, because he helps Jim run away. As Jim and Huck travel down the Mississippi, Huck, at first, does not think much of the fact that he is helping Jim escape to freedom. As the novel progresses, though, Huck begins to think about the consequences of his actions. The things that the Widow had previously worked diligently to install in Huck had some effect on him. This is apparent for the first time when Jim expresses his anxiety to become free. This makes Huck feel nervous of the deed that he is doing. " Well I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free --- and who was to blame for it? Why me" (Twain 85). Huck's first reaction is that he is letting the Widow Douglas down by not returning her property. Huck is only worried about honor and what was right for the time but a similar event happens later in the novel where Huck considers his actions a little more carefully. Huckleberry finally begins to realize that Jim is not property, but an actual person. He plays a trick on Jim and finds out that he has feelings too. This brings Huck and Jim closer together and Huck accepts the fact that Jim is not a slave but a friend. Huck is tried again for what to do about Jim when Jim is sold to Silas Phelps down south. He knew he had to get

Jim out somehow and he still was feeling guilty for taking him in the first place. " And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know that my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven" (Twain 204). Huck decides to write to Jim to save him from a life of slavery with a complete stranger. He never sends the letter but he feels much better after he writes it. " All right, then, I'll go to hell" (206). Ultimately, Huck came to the conclusion that he has already done so many sinful things that there was no use in trying to get to heaven anymore. Today, many Americans would look at Huck and believe he was right in trying to free Jim. During the era of the Civil War, many would think differently. Huckleberry Finn could hardly be called sacrilegious but he was no saint either. Religion had a good deal of impact on him. It almost caused him to give himself up to do what he thought was right. In the beginning of the novel, we see that Huck is not interested in religion, or what the Widow has