Encountering Faiths & Beliefs

Primary School

**Lena write about being a Spiritualist**

Hello, my name is Lena, and I'm going to talk to you today and share my religious beliefs.

As a little girl I lived in a tiny village in the countryside, which was beautiful, but sometimes lonely, as there were not many children... so I would go out on my bicycle to the woods and fields, talk with horses, and watch nature growing... they became my friends!  My parents were Christian, so I would go to the church at Christmas and at Easter time.  But, I felt there was more to discover, feel and learn about religion.

So now, I call myself spiritual... because I feel like I have a spirit living in me, given to me by God, and this makes me alive...  and so my life is about finding out what it means to be me, a human being.

I belong to a group called Emin, which, if you mix those 4 letters round, it says 'in me', and I want to find out what is in me, and what my life is all about.

In me are what I call 'lives'.  Lives of feelings, and these are many like happy, sad, angry, strong, trust, being brave, loving, being honest.  Also an automatic life... once I learn something, like say washing my teeth... I don't have to think how to put the paste on, how to pick up my brush... it becomes automatic.

It is very important for me to have value and respect and to love this life which I call spirit, which I believe is a small part of God living inside of me, and I want my spirit, which I call light, to be bright in me as much as possible.

I believe that respecting and loving our lives, or our spirits, means being kind to ourselves and to others. It means recognizing that we are all special and unique, and I try to be thankful, happy, honest and kind with myself, and with other people.

That is why I love festivals.  They are days when people gather to celebrate together with laughter, prayer, joy, music, singing, and with thanks.  It is a wonderful time to be with friends.

A few years ago, I went to midnight mass with my friend.  We went to the cathedral, a very big Christian church, at midnight, on Christmas Eve, to celebrate the birth of Jesus.... when you all would have been snuggled up in bed.  People came in from the cold and the dark and a bit tired, to say their prayers to God.  The priest, the man leading the service, was saying prayers and everyone was praying then we were singing.  When we stopped the priest said for us to turn to the people next to us and say, 'Peace be with you'.

And as I turned to the people standing next to me, they were all with big smiles, their eyes bright  and they were very very happy, and it was a very special moment.   So now, I like to go to Christmas eve mass every year, so I can pray and wish for peace and love, and share these feelings with everyone around me.   I know that everyone in the world wants to be happy and to be loved.... just like us.

What I really value and like about my faith is that every day I am  learning about what belief is.  What is belief?  What is trust?  and what is Love?  I like to read and study, watch people, and even watch myself to learn how to be kind..how to be gentle..how to be loving..how to be honest.

Life, to me is in everything... people, cats, dogs, tigers, bees, butterflies, flowers, trees...

Isn't it magical that we could not live without the trees? ... as you know from your lessons, the leaves make oxygen, and people need to breathe oxygen to keep us alive... it's amazing!

Also you know, if I ever feel sad or unhappy... I sometimes talk to a tree, or stand next to a tree.  It always makes me feel safe, protected, strong and not alone.. and for me that is important because it is a real thing that happens.. A tree is a tree... it doesn't try to be a daffodil or a rose, and so I feel totally safe and loved beside a tree - and it becomes like my friend.

There are lots of beautiful things I like from all the different religions.  Perhaps the singing, the symbols, like the Star of David and the menorah - the candlestick for 7 candles.  The Silver cup on the alter in the church.

Mostly I like the statue of the Buddha; and I have one in my home.  It is very small, and sits in a special shelf, alongside some crystals.. It always gives a feeling of peace and stillness; and it makes me feel looked after and accepted .. what I mean by that is that I am loved just as I am, and I don't have to say or do anything clever... I can be just me, as I am, quite perfect! It's a lovely warm feeling like being cuddled!