

Fireside Essay Scholarship

How is your religious education influencing your life?

Having a religious education is something that a lot of people miss out on, and for a lot of people, they are completely fine with that. But little do they know they are missing out on something huge. For the majority of my childhood, I was homeschooled and never had a religious education, until I went to a Catholic school in grade eight and a Catholic high school. I have thus experienced my education from both perspectives, and to this day, I am glad that I chose my catholic school board. Currently I am uncertain as to which religion my beliefs fall under, but the opportunity to study religion each year at _____ has taught me that an overwhelming amount of strength and perseverance can come from having faith in something beyond myself, and it is this faith that has kept me from giving up on life.

High school has not been such a breeze for me like it is for some people. I have not enjoyed it like I should have. I have been battling depression for three of my four years in high school, and a couple times over the three years, I came close to giving up on life. I was bullied, terrorized, and forced into believing that there was no point in being alive. I was lost in thoughts like, "I do not want to be here anymore," "I am tired of living a life feeling unwanted," and "I am done,"... but at the end of the day, I never actually did give up. Something pushed me to keep grinding my way through what was going on in my life: my faith. Although, I have no exact name for what I believe in, I am certain there is something or someone out there that has given me the strength to keep fighting, even when I did not want to anymore. Even when I was too

tired to do so, my faith gave me the will to keep going and I can thank my religious education for this opportunity.

My life has been greatly influenced by this faith, and I am determined to figure out what it is throughout the rest of my life, because it is the reason that I still have a life at all. Having a religious education has opened my eyes to seeing the world in new and different ways which has given me the ability to view my own life situations in different ways and has taught me how to assess them and how to react to them. Before really caring about my own faith, my life seemed incapable of rising past the lowest of lows, and I was never sure of how to overcome my problems. This did not change until I took the time to understand what it was I was managing to believe in, coming to the realization that having faith is a reason to keep going. Sitting in religion has granted me the ability to understand just that.

Having taken religion in every year of high school, I have had the opportunity to learn how to place my thoughts and beliefs in certain faiths and if I had not had that opportunity, I would not have known how to deal with what I've been through the last three years. I would have been completely lost, confused and scared, but my religious education, through its teachings, has made sure that did not happen, and that has greatly affected my life.

My religious education is something I will be forever grateful of, because on top of it influencing my personal life and my own mental health, it has made me a better person. It has influenced me to be a better person and how to live the right way in terms of how to be kind, caring, giving, respectful, compassionate, and loving. It has also taught me how many other people around the world live and why they live that way. Learning this throughout high school has made me a stronger person because I now take the time to interpret each of those things in

my life and try to rid myself of the things that are negative. To me, my religious education is something I am glad I earned throughout high school, and I know it will continue to have great influence on how I'll live the rest of my life.

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