

What We Believe - Our Faith

Seventh-day Adventists

At the heart of Seventh-day Adventist teachings is the belief that all people are God's children. This means that through God's Son Jesus, every man, woman and child on earth can find peace and joy in this life and in the promised life to come. The Bible is our source of this assurance as well as the source of our Christian beliefs. As we come to know and love our Heavenly Father, we realize our inheritance and discover His purpose for our lives. We learn that the God of love wants us to share His love with others.

This is written to help you understand who Seventh-day Adventists are and why we like you care deeply about the people in our community. Our ultimate desire is not simply to share a set of beliefs, but to share God's love and grace.

So what do Adventists believe?

The Church is a Safe Haven for Growth

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is one of many Christian communities of faith. We treasure the knowledge that we are loved and accepted by the Creator God. Our name comes from the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath and a belief in the second coming or "advent" of Jesus. Adventists attend church on Saturday - joining together for worship, fellowship and Bible study. The Bible is the source of our Christian beliefs.

The church is a safe place for healing and growth. The Adventist church welcomes all people to worship services. Formal membership includes being baptized by immersion which symbolizes our union with God, the forgiveness of sins and our desire to enter into a new life. The most important goal of the Adventist church is to exemplify the love of God and to proclaim hope for people in a troubled world. Church membership is our way of declaring that we need God and each other for life to be meaningful. (*Ezekiel 36:26; 1 John 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26*)

Perfect Beginnings

Adventists believe in the biblical account of creation. God made everything—the heavens, the earth, the sea and every living thing. His creation was glorious and perfect in every detail. The Bible says, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) His crowning work was the creation of man and woman—formed in His very own image. Adam and Eve spoke with their Creator face-to-face. God did not force His children's love and obedience, but gave them the freedom to obey or disobey Him. (Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 33:6-9; Joshua 24:15)

Trouble Begins

Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and experience the effects of sin. Their sin distanced them from their loving Creator. The trust relationship was damaged, and they could no longer communicate with Him face-to-face. The earth, once a place of life, joy, peace and love, would now experience death, disease, suffering, sorrow, hatred and misery. That's how the human story began. (Genesis 3:8-11, 17-19)

The Rest of the Story

But that's not how the story ends, because there is good news, really good news. Even before Adam and Eve made their fatal choice, God had prepared the plan of salvation—a plan to bring man and God back into perfect harmony. Jesus would come to earth and die to restore the perfect world that had been broken by sin. (I Peter 1:18-20; Ephesians 1:3-4; Matthew 25:34)

The Gift of a New Life

The death of Jesus teaches us that sin is best understood, not simply as breaking the law, but rather as breaking the loving heart of God. The death of Jesus on our behalf teaches us that God's love is so great He will do whatever it takes to restore our eternal friendship with Him. God gave us the ultimate gift of His Son, and He continues to give us new life daily as part of that gift of grace. (John 3:16; Romans 3:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Gift Giver: Perfect God, Perfect Man

Salvation and new life are gifts from Jesus, who is God in human form—divinity and humanity perfectly united. Because He is God, He has the power and authority to forgive and save us. Because He is man, he understands our joys and sorrows. Although born into a sinful world, He lived a perfect life on our behalf. Because of His great love for us, He died on a cross, was resurrected, and went to heaven where He is now with the Father. He is still with us today through His Holy Spirit—our Comforter—every day, every minute. (John 1:14; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 4:14-15; John 14:16)

The Recipe for Joy

In His Ten Commandments God explains how we can have a loving relationship with Him and with each other. The commandments are a trustworthy guide for living an abundant life. The first four guide us in our relationship with God, the remaining six remind us to treat our fellow human beings with love and respect.

Obedience to these commandments requires choices. When you love someone, you naturally choose to express your affection and appreciation. That's how it is when you love God. Living the Christian life arises from gratitude to God and a desire to honor Him. And when we fall short of His plan for us, God reminds us that He offers forgiveness as a gift of grace through Jesus.

In addition to the Ten Commandments, we learn how to live from Jesus' teachings and example. He teaches us to love God, to love each other and to love ourselves. He gives us the gift of His love to make such love possible. (Exodus 20:3-17; Deuteronomy 10:13; John 13:34-35; John 14:15; 1 John 3:16)

God Listens When We Pray

Through prayer, we open our hearts to God as if talking with a friend. If we can talk, we can pray. Indeed, if we can think, we can pray. No topic is too great or too small. Jesus taught His disciples to praise God in their prayers, to ask for daily bread and to share the burdens on their hearts. While God already knows what we need, prayer provides the way for us to receive the good things He wants to give us.

But sometimes we don't receive what we ask for, and that can be very difficult. We don't always understand

why our prayers aren't answered as we wish, but through faith we can be absolutely sure that God loves us, has our best interests in mind, and is with us no matter what happens.

Too often our conversation with God is one-sided. It is important that we not only talk to God, but that we listen to Him as well. If we're willing to listen, we can hear God's voice through Bible study, through the still small voice of His Holy Spirit, through His created wonders in nature, and through our deepest human relationships. (Psalm 55:22; Romans 12:12; Jeremiah 29:11-12; Psalm 119:10-11)

Guarding Our Good Health

God gives each of us the opportunity to be all that He intends for us to be. Seventh-day Adventists believe a wholesome lifestyle contributes to good physical, mental and spiritual health.

Why are Adventists so passionate about good health? The Bible says, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? . . . For God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple." (I Corinthians 3:16-17) A healthful diet, refraining from harmful substances, adequate exercise and rest are also important in taking care of our body-temple. (I Corinthians 10:31; 3 John 2)

Rest from Stress, Fear and Anxiety

The Bible tells us that after God created the world in six days, He rested on the seventh day. He sanctified the Sabbath—set it apart as a holy day. Later, when He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, God explained the Sabbath in more detail. The Sabbath is a day to remind us that God is the Creator and worthy of our worship.

The Sabbath is not an ordinary day for ordinary activities. The Sabbath is a day to put aside work, secular pursuits and self-interests—a day to shut out the sin of the world and receive the needed gifts of peace and rest. When God rested on the first Sabbath day it wasn't because He was exhausted or needed to recover from His labors. Rather, He rested as an example to us, because He knew that we would become weary and would need rest.

Celebrated from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, the Sabbath is a spiritual experience as well as a time of physical rest. During His earthly ministry, Jesus made it clear that the Sabbath was made for our benefit. It was not to be a burden or encumbered with unreasonable man-made rules. Jesus celebrated the Sabbath by attending the synagogue, healing the sick and spending time with those He loved.

Following Jesus' example of healing, Adventist Health hospitals continue to meet the needs of their patients during the Sabbath hours. All essential medical care and services are provided every day. (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27; John 5:1-16)

A Very Happy Ending

Adventists believe that Jesus will return to this earth to take us home with Him forever. "I am going there to prepare a place for you," Jesus said. "When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." (John 14:2,3) On that happy day, the entire universe will know beyond doubt that God is indeed a God of forgiveness and love, and that His ways are best.

The Bible says Jesus will come in glory to deliver His people and to restore all things. Loved ones who have rested asleep in their graves will be called back to life to join us in our new home in a perfect world—a world free from pain, suffering and death. We don't know all the details about heaven, but we believe it is a very real place. A place where people from every generation, every culture, and every nation on earth will experience everlasting life, love and joy in fellowship with one another and with our wonderful Lord. (Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 21:3-4)

Conclusion

That's the short version of what Adventists believe. For further information visit the following website — <http://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/>

If you would like to learn more about Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and lifestyle, please contact:

Campus Ministries at 951-785-2090

Seventh-day Adventists and Education

Since its beginnings in 1922 as La Sierra Academy, La Sierra University has operated by the principles that guide all Seventh-day Adventist schools, to educate and nurture the whole person, mind, body and spirit.

This model, often referred to as the Adventist blueprint for education, is based upon the influential book, *"Education,"* published in 1903 by church visionary Ellen G. White. It is a model that under-girds the entire Adventist school system, one of the largest private school systems in the world. Formal Adventist education got its start in 1872 when the first school sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination opened in Battle Creek, Michigan. The global church now operates 7,883 schools for K-12, higher education and worker training with a total enrollment of approximately 1.8 million students.

Adventism's holistic paradigm continues to direct La Sierra University as it leads students to seek truth, know God and serve others.

