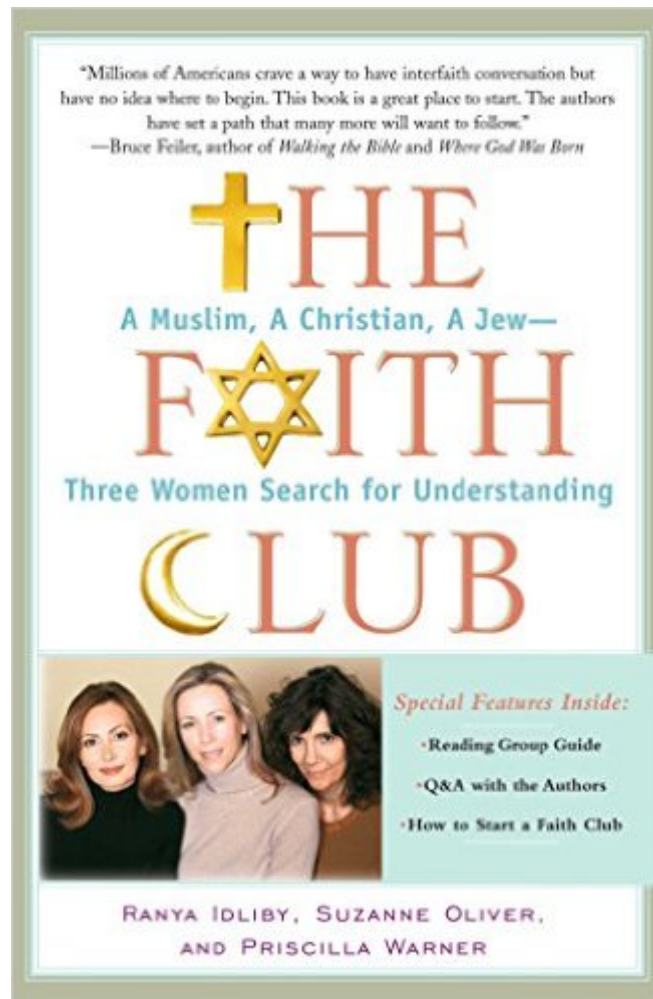


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# The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew-- Three Women Search For Understanding



## Synopsis

A groundbreaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect, *The Faith Club* weaves the story of three women, their three religions, and their urgent quest to understand one another. When an American Muslim woman befriends two other mothers, one Jewish and one Christian, they decide to educate their children about their respective religions. None of them guessed their regular meetings would provide life-changing answers and form bonds that would forever alter their struggles with prejudice, fear, and anger. Personal, powerful, and compelling, *The Faith Club* forces readers to face the tough questions about their own religions. Pioneering, timely, deeply thoughtful, and full of hope, *The Faith Club*'s caring message will resonate with people of all faiths.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a wonderful pastor once said from the pulpit, you can't deal with a forty year old's problems with a belief system that you learned when you were twelve. This book is a definite help in growing that faith; but growth is sometimes painful and what you started with may not be what you wind up with. At first I was a bit skeptical; the book appeared to be a group of wealthy highly educated ivy league women sitting around the table discussing religion, but did I underestimate! This book is truly a profound exposure of the beliefs, prejudices, hopes, fears, and foundations of three major religions without the theologians. These women may live in expensive houses, but faith, lack of faith, or misunderstanding of faith is universal. They say the things that many of us think but are either embarrassed or too confused to express, and they say them to the very people that share a similar

confusion but from a different perspective. Through that often painful exposure comes understanding, or the acceptance that some things cannot be understood. Someone in the book makes the statement that the opposite of faith isn't doubt, it is certainty. That makes a ton of sense. It would be wonderful to follow up the reading of this book with discussions in such a faith club as the book suggests; however, I would warn that such open discussions probably cannot happen randomly or quickly. These three women spent more than a year coming to the stage that they could openly take their ideas outside of their group even to their own families and friends. Understanding your own faith much less someone else's, isn't quick; I greatly admire the perseverance it took these women to "walk the walk" and then to have the courage to share it with the world.

The Faith Club arose out of the rubble of 9-11, as three young mothers living in New York City - a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew - agreed to meet together to discuss their differing faiths and how they might learn to live together in peace. They could not have imagined what was in store for them. At a minimum, it meant hours of gut-wrenching, painful, honest self-disclosure, as they explained to each other, as best they could, what they believed and why, and as they challenged each other with the obvious ambiguities and inconsistencies of their different faith perspectives. It also meant a lot of personal growth as, through the process of interfaith dialogue - and we're talking about a period of over two years here - the women grappled with what they really believed, as opposed to what they had always been taught - and as they seriously considered the faith and understanding of each other. No holds were barred. They talked openly and honestly about everything you can imagine: The Christian understanding of Jesus' crucifixion and whether or not the Jews were to blame; the Jewish claim to a Promised Land and what that meant for Palestinians; the suspicion that all Muslims are terrorists-in-waiting, versus the fact that the majority of Muslims are as peace-loving as everyone else. Out of their dialogue, the women came to appreciate and accept each other as individuals who share a common humanity and a common quest for peace, albeit from different faith perspectives. More than that, they came to love each other, and that love helped them bridge the gap between their different religious traditions. What I appreciated most about The Faith Club is its raw, often brutal, honesty.

This book does more than put a band-aid on the uneasy co-existence of the three Abrahamic faiths in America and over the world. The authors here confront stereotypes about their own and each others' faiths, and they don't pull any punches. The Jewish woman, Priscilla, confronts Christian

Suzanne, challenging her claim that she'd never heard Jews being blamed for Christ's death. But that's nothing compared to the discussion that emerges when the Israel-Palestine situation comes up. I strongly recommend this book for Americans who simplistically wonder "Why don't the Arabs just take care of the Palestinian problem?" The Muslim, Ranya, whose parents lost their ancestral home when Israel came into being, offers the little-heard (in this country) story of Palestinian dispossession. She is quite clear in her condemnation of Muslim extremists, and it is wonderful to read how she has become an important figure in uniting the American Muslim community, which is overwhelmingly moderate, and represents a sort of diaspora from around the world. I learned that most Muslims in the world aren't even Arabs, many do not wear head dress, and that the faith itself is much closer to my personal beliefs (raised Catholic, married to a Jew) than I would have guessed. Ich bin ein Muslim -- who knew? While, unlike Suzanne, I had a thorough education in the horror Christians have inflicted on Jews, I was taught next to nothing about Muslims -- just the oft-repeated story about the thousand virgins who are the reward for those who self-annihilate in the name of Allah. Americans need to have this, and the many other negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, corrected.

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