

FFFA-Q

Who are you?

We are Fundy Freethought, an organization based in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. We started off as two loosely organized discussion groups that met at a pub on occasion, had a few drinks and talked about religion (or lack thereof) and other topics that skeptics usually chat about. Skeptics in the Pub and Atheist Pint Night started growing by leaps and bounds; attracting more and more people every meeting but both groups had no idea the other existed. When the owner of the pub informed both sides of each other's existence, the roots for Fundy Freethought were firmly planted. After we began joining each other's events and Facebook groups, discussion led to merging into one organization. Fundy Freethought's goal, or mantra, is to promote reason, logic, education and critical thinking.

What do you do?

While promoting reason, logic, and education we do a number of things. We have meetings in social situations to give atheists, agnostics, humanists, skeptics and others a voice when sometimes they feel they cannot speak openly about such things. We help those who are stuck in a religion with no way out, even if it is just a simple "*You are not alone*", it can make all the difference in someone's life. Not just a voice, but a community safe from the barrier of persecution or abandonment. We support charity endeavours as well as groups fighting social stereotypes such as the LGBT community by supporting pride parades among other events. We will be doing more

in the coming months/years, from holding secular summer camps for children to science fairs. We are also looking toward awarding a scholarship for promising young scientific minds. We also campaign against pseudo-science infiltrating our medical system delaying people seeking needed medical attention for possibly treatable conditions and against archaic dogma entering our government.

Why do you do what you do?

Religious dogma, supernatural speculation, superstition, and dangerous misinformation are a prevalent force in the Fundy region and there really doesn't seem to be an entity to oppose these things. We encourage truth and education through open honest discussion and research to put falsehoods to rest. We do what we do because we cannot allow for ignorance, delusion or lies to frame the narrative. We must strive for evidence instead of superstition, questions instead of ultimate answers based on belief alone, and fact instead of fiction. We care about truth. This is the only way humanity can progress.

Aren't you just a religion?

Well no, and there are a few reasons why we aren't. Religion is defined as an organized belief in the supernatural with adherence to tenets and beliefs with the practice of rituals, sermons, commemoration or devotion of a deity, gods or goddesses. Even if you take the supernatural out of the definition, we still aren't a religion. We have no set of rules one must follow in order to become a

member, and no worship. We also will change our minds if we are wrong when faced with verifiable evidence. Nothing is set in stone, so to speak. Atheism is also one of the few belief systems (actually it is simply just the lack of belief in a deity) that requires absolutely nothing from you. We are simply a collective organization, and are no more a religion than the SPCA or a book club is. Many of our members come from various backgrounds, ethnicities and political stances. We follow no dogma, and only accept what actual evidence suggests (which, as with all knowledge is subject to scrutiny and change if new information surfaces). We also do this for the sake of having a community. As humans are social animals this is our way of socializing. Religion does not have a monopoly on community.

How do I join you guys?

We are always looking for volunteers for various events we host or take part in. Or if you just want to come have an open discussion with fellow critical thinkers, feel free to drop by any event we host such as Saint John Skeptics in the Pub or Atheist Pint Night! We are looking to organize some non-drinking events as well. You can keep up with our events by using our calendar or check our Fundy Freethought Facebookpage.

You are going to HELL!

That's not really a question. This is a Frequently Asked Questions page, but let's address this anyway. Telling any of us to go to hell is

like a hippy threatening to punch us in the aura. It's a meaningless gesture. Most of us do not believe in any gods, therefore we do not believe hell exists. Rather than threatening any of us with benign rhetoric perhaps you could find something better to do with your time.

Why do you guys bully religious people, can't you just let people believe what they want to?

Well we don't mean to bully believers, and we don't aim to maliciously attack anyone's beliefs. If you read something on our Facebook page, website or something posted in one of our events that offends you, feel free to 'change the channel'. We don't mean this to be rude, we just believe we have the right to free speech, just as you do. If you don't want our notifications in your newsfeed, there is a little 'x' you can click that will give you the option to turn off all notifications from our group. If you refuse to do this and continue to read things that offend you, we view this as your own problem. You own that problem. Going to someone else's home and telling them how to behave seems a bit controlling doesn't it? Visiting our website is also your own choice. While we encourage believers to speak with us and most of our members are open for any civil debate, we do not, and will not go out looking for a fight. You do not have 'the right to not be offended', although you do have the right to believe what you want. If you decide to join us in discussion, please take it into account that if your beliefs cannot stand up to criticism, then maybe it's time to take a second look at your beliefs.

Why can't you just let people believe what they want? (Part 2)

For the most part, we do. Nobody cares if you believe there is a pink unicorn in your garage that farts rainbows. You are free to believe that all you want. But do not try convincing me of your belief if you have no evidence to support it, then get angry with me for pointing out flaws in your logic that suggests you do not have said unicorn. You are not being oppressed. Your beliefs are being challenged due to a claim you are making, and if you do not have anything to back up your statements, that is nobody's fault but your own. Religion has held all the cards for thousands of years. There was a time, and in some places it still happens, where if someone questioned religion, they were executed. Atheists were executed. There are many valid reasons for us to question religion and oppose it. You can believe what you want, but beliefs do not have rights like humans should. That question can go the other way as well. Why can't you just let us question beliefs?

What if <insert new age website here> says that <insert claim here> is true and science is wrong?

Well, if they can provide proper evidence, then we will accept it and change our minds. We can admit when we're wrong if evidence can be produced. So far, <insert new age website here> has been nothing but speculation, superstition, lies, and blither.

How do you get your morals without (a) god?

Natural human empathy combined with knowledge of the consequences of our actions, including but not limited to how I may negatively affect others by what I do...Where do you get yours? Morality does not come from the bible. Here is something you can do by yourself to understand what I mean. Do you agree with everything in the bible? For example: If you have a daughter and she gets raped, if she refuses to marry her rapist, should you stone her to death? No, you shouldn't. You know you shouldn't. Now you are probably thinking "Well there are parts of the bible that are outdated and/or you just shouldn't follow". My question is, how do you know what to pick and choose from the bible? That would be your sense of morality. You agree with some things in the bible, but think some other things are wrong to do, such as stoning your daughter to death. The bible didn't tell you this was morally wrong. You did. You knew it was wrong even though the bible suggested it was ok. If you really want to discuss this further, feel free to drop in one of our social gatherings. Believers and theists are always welcome.

You say **believers are welcome at any of your functions?**

Of course they are! Whether you just want to know what an atheist is like, or you are a believer but don't subscribe to all that new age 'woo woo' such as healing crystals, we have something for you. Saint John Skeptics in the Pub and Atheist Pint Night have both had believers attend. You can believe in a god and still know that 9-11 was not an

inside job. Don't forget, we promote reason and skepticism not just on the topic of religion. If you want to debate one of us, we welcome that as well, just please don't single a person out. Some are up for it while others may shy away from confrontation. There will always be someone willing to take that task on, and we'll make it known. We also usually need volunteers for any functions we do or support. The more, the merrier.