

# Don't believe it? Don't tick it!

## National Census 2011

In March 2011, the National Census forms will be sent to all addresses in the UK to gather information on the population and once again one of the questions will be:

**“What is your religion?”**

To get a true picture of non-belief in the UK, we are encouraging people who do not follow any religion or believe in a god to say so and tick the box marked: **“No religion”**

## Ever been asked your religion?

Have you ever had to fill in a form, part of which asks “What is your religion?” Then, as a result of being asked that question, you tick the box marked “Christian” or “Church of England” or whatever, simply because you were once christened. Some people think that is simply what you should put because we are often told by the media that we live in a “Christian country”, even if they don't believe a word of it?

## Pseudo-religions

You may have heard of people who object to being asked their religion and have jokingly decided to rebel by giving their religion as “Jedi” (yes, as in Star Wars) or “Pastafarian” (Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster), or some other pseudo-religion. Whilst this shows a sense of humour, it also helps inflate the number of people who are counted as being religious and reduces the number of genuine non-believers. The more that atheists stand together to be counted, the louder the voice we will have to combat the false claims, influence and undeserved privileges of the religious institutions.

## Were you once christened? So what?

Here at Atheism we want to get a true picture of non-belief in the UK and we are encouraging people who do not follow any religion or believe in a god to say so and tick the box marked “No religion” in the 2011 National Census. Nobody should owe allegiance to a religion simply because the society in which they live claims it is part of the culture, as is the case with Christianity in the UK. Every one of us who was christened as a child was too young to understand or object when their parents took them into a church and had water splashed over their heads. We want people to be true to themselves and not to inflate the numbers of religious people who claim irrational faith and beliefs, and demand undeserved privileges because of it.

### **What can I do to help?**

1. Tick the “No religion” box yourself when your census form arrives and don’t let anyone else tick it for you.
2. Talk to your friends and family about it, they may listen to you.
3. Do not complete the “Any other religion” option, even as a joke.
4. Write to your local newspaper or radio station and tell them of your intentions and why.
5. Blog about it. Spreading messages such as ours will encourage others to do the same.
6. Respond to criticism of religious people who complain about this, after all, what have they got to hide? Why do they want to inflate their numbers?
7. Come out as an atheist; be proud and be public that you embrace critical and rational thinking.
8. **Join us at Atheism, get involved and make a stand to help all atheists have their voices heard.**

**End**

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