
Religious Ministry Team Handbook



U.S. Marine Corps

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

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FOREWORD

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-12A, *Religious Ministry Team Handbook*, guides commanders, chaplains, Religious Program Specialists (RPs), and lay leaders in providing religious ministry and effective command religious programs (CRPs). It builds on the operational religious ministry principles in Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-12, *Religious Ministry Support in the U.S. Marine Corps*, and lessons learned from chaplains who ministered in war and peace.

MCRP 6-12A clarifies the tasks and functions of the religious ministry team (RMT). It is a ready access to the tools RMTs need to perform their duties in today's expeditionary forces. Religious ministry in the Marine Corps is a combination of technique, common sense, art, experience, and caring about Marines and their families in garrison while being operationally ready at all times in every clime and place.

This publication supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 3-6, *Religious Ministries in the Fleet Marine Force*, dated 29 August 1989, and FMFM 3-61, *Ministry in Combat*, dated 22 June 1992.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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PREFACE

The beginning of the 21st century has been a time of instability and military conflict. Marines and Sailors are deployed around the world in harm's way. More than ever, they need chaplains and Religious Program Specialists operating as effective religious ministry teams to be there with them. Our servicemembers must be afforded the religious freedom they so courageously defend.

Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists are essential members of any command staff. They fulfill invaluable staff roles that enable our commanders to fulfill their duties and accomplish all their missions. To this end, they must be prepared and trained with the most up-to-date and relevant knowledge so that we may provide our commanders accurate and timely advice.

This publication is founded on the operational ministry principles established in MCWP 6-12, *Religious Ministry Support in the U.S. Marine Corps*. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the broad spectrum of tasks and functions we are all responsible for in our ministry to the sea services.

We commend this publication to you for your use. May it be a valuable tool in your ministry.



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Chapter 1

Overview of Operational Religious Ministry Principles

The mission of religious ministry support in the Marine Corps is to accommodate the religious practices of personnel to facilitate the free exercise of religion for the Marines and Sailors serving in the Marine Corps, their family members, and other authorized personnel. Religious ministry support develops and strengthens the spiritual and moral well being of the Marines, Sailors, and their family members, thereby enhancing personal, family and unit readiness of the Marine Corps.

Comprehensive religious ministry support and command religious programs (CRPs) are intentionally developed in response to identified religious accommodation requirements for Marines, Sailors, and their family members.

A principle is an accepted or professed rule of action or conduct. The eight operational religious ministry principles that form the basis for the conduct of religious ministry support in the Marine Corps are intentionality, mission and focus of effort, planning, communication, professional competence, sustainment, operational mobility, and mutual support. Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists (RPs) bring these principles to bear on every aspect of their ministry to the men and women they serve. See Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP 6-12), *Religious Ministry Support in the US Marine Corps*, for a detailed discussion of each principle.