Religion is a group of beliefs and rituals. It consists of rules, stories, and symbols that are adopted by society, a group, or a person. Children, like adults, have the freedom to choose and practice their religion, this right is protected by article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: “States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1999 also defends religious freedom for children in article 9. The Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child can draft reports after having investigated a country. In the 47 countries making up the Council of Europe, freedom of thought and religion are protected by article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for children as well as adults. If a country does not abide by it, it may be punished by the European Court of Human Rights.

The notion of religious freedom is not universally recognized and accepted throughout the world. People do not have the same freedom of religion from one country to another. In numerous countries and on every continent, religion can be a source of conflict and even wars. Unfortunately, children are commonly the victims. Religion is very important for many societies; it allows children to learn morals, and answers questions regarding life and death, relationships between people and their place in the world, and notions of good and evil. The major religions are all based on ideals of wisdom, solidarity, and justice. All this is passed down to children by their families, school, and society so they maybe assimilate and be respectful. Religious authorities can play an important role in improving the application of the Rights of the Child. As influential and respected members of their communities, religious leaders can encourage the actions and development of the protection of children. They also possess the necessary influence to stop these practices, customs, sources of violence, and discrimination against children.

In conclusion, religion should not be imposed on children. Instead it should be explained to them in a concise way to make them feel comfortable.