

# Apple Pie Day Commentary

**Pamela Dickey Young**

School of Religion, Queen's University

What constitutes a religious action or practice? Is something religious because it uses religious words or acknowledged religious rituals? Because it takes place in a known religious place? Because the participants think of themselves as religious?

In “Apple Pie Day” we see an explicitly religious space (a church) used for the purpose of making apple pies as a fundraising activity. But this is not necessarily only a “secular” activity. One way to view the making and selling of these pies is as an extension of the religious activity of the individuals and community that make the pies.

The pie making itself has ritual aspects. The activity of pie making has happened over many years. People have defined roles and actions. It is not only a labour, one assumes, but a labour of love both for the community who will benefit from the proceeds, but also for the people who will buy and consume the pies which are made by hand for them.

The pie making is one way in which the local church bonds together to create (religious) community among its members. What at home would be a relatively private activity of making a pie becomes in the larger context, a public event where bonding takes place in shared work.

The preparation and consumption of food and drink are often associated with religion, as with Sabbath and Passover meals in the Jewish tradition or with the Eucharist or Agape celebrations in the Christian tradition. Making and consuming apple pies can be seen as a recognition of food as feeding both body and soul. Providing food in many religious traditions is an act of hospitality that acknowledges the shared humanity of those providing the food and those consuming it. I also hear in the commentary an echo of the New Testament story of the loaves and fishes—what seems an insurmountable task with only a few ingredients can become something much more.

One way to read the story of “Apple Pie Day,” then, is as one account of lived religion—in this case, where people who think of themselves as connected to a specific religious organization perform or act out their religion in a variety of ways in their everyday lives, not just in those ways we might think of as explicitly “religious.”