

## Unit: Discovering World Religions

Grade Level: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Overview:** This Unit plan is meant to give 6<sup>th</sup> grade students a basic understanding of five world religions: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism. This unit focuses on the following aspects in regards to the religions mentioned above: key ideas, key people, origins and current areas where the religion is practiced, and culture of the religion. If students understand the basic principles of these religions, they will be less likely to be afraid of or exclude members of these religions. This will create a better classroom community and more tolerant student attitudes. Throughout this unit plan I have tried to utilize multiple resources and technology. Two lessons center on computer activities. Students are beginning to develop computer skills at younger and younger ages, so I think it is important to practice these skills in the classroom. I also tried to incorporate activities to stimulate multiple intelligences. I am currently doing a literature review on this topic and I think it is important to allow for the success of students with different kinds of academic strengths. I tried to incorporate learning experiences which allow students to work together and learn from their peers as well. I believe that tolerance and understanding of different religions is an important lesson to teach students.

**Desired Student Outcomes:** Students will list the information they already know about religions. Students will identify a certain question they have about a religion. Students will be able to identify the areas of origin for the five discussed religions (Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam). Students will relate to a religious figure. Students will compare music and photographs of festivities from the religions. Students will identify facts about each religion and be able to group the religions as monotheistic or polytheistic. As a group, students will research a certain religion and create a poster and presentation listing and explaining the facts about an assigned religion. Students will perform internet and book research. Students will: 1) discuss why Nepal is primarily a Hindu country, 2) discuss the meaning of the statement on Nepalese "spiritual richness," 3) explore National Geographic's Trekking Nepal site and take notes on Nepalese religious customs and practices and on evidence of Nepalese "spiritual richness," 4) compare and contrast the openness and prominence of religious practices and "spiritual richness" in Nepal with those in the students' home country. Students will value and respect other religions.

### Learning Standards:

**Standard 2:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives. **Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. **Performance Indicator:** students will know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations. **Key Idea 3:** Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involved learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. **Performance Indicator:** investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices throughout world history. **Key Idea 4:** The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain that importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time. **Performance Indicator:** view history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

**Standard 3:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live- local, national, and global- including the distribution of people, places, and environment over the earth's surface.

**Key Idea 1:** Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. **Performance Indicator:** map information about people, places, and environments.

**Standard 5:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the U.S. and other nations; the U.S. Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation. **Key Idea 4:** The study of civics and citizenship requires the ability to probe ideas and assumptions, ask and answer analytical questions, take a skeptical attitude toward questionable arguments, evaluate evidence, formulate rational conclusions, and develop and refine participatory skills. **Performance Indicator:** Students will respect the rights of others in discussions and classroom debates regardless of whether or not one agrees with their viewpoint.

## Lesson Plan 1

Title: Finding Out What We Know About World Religions

Learning Standards:

**Standard 2:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives. **Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. **Performance Indicator:** students will know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations

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Desired Student Outcomes: Students will list the information they already know about religions. Students will identify a certain question they have about a religion.

Lesson Rationale: This lesson will introduce students to the unit on religion. It will provide the teacher with a survey of the knowledge that students already have about religions. The lesson will set a base for students to begin tolerating and respecting all religions.

Prior Knowledge Needed: How to share in small and large group discussions. Have students heterogeneously arranged (with differing levels of ability, gender, and race in each group, switching groups each month).

Resources and Materials Needed: black board (or chart paper), writing utensils for each student, scrap paper, and the book, "Kaddish for Grandpa in Jesus' Name Amen," by Catherine Stock.

Lesson Timeline:

*Motivational Introduction (1-2 min):* "I'm going to start today's lesson by reading you a story. It is meant for younger students, but I think the message will still be valuable to you."

*Detailed Sequence of Learning Experiences (40 min):*

- Read "Kaddish for Grandpa in Jesus' Name Amen" (9 min)
- Have a whole group discussion about the book: (10 min)
  - "Why do you think it has this title?" (suggested response: Because Kaddish signifies a Jewish prayer, and Amen signifies a Christian prayer.)
  - "Neither way to respect her grandfather was *better*, but the little girl got to experience both a Christian and Jewish funeral. She also had her own way to remember him, holding his glasses case. I think that this book does a good job illustrating the point that while religions may have different beliefs and practices, they are all valuable."
  - "In the book the girl had family members who were both Christian and Jewish. Do you think that this is the case for many children? Having multiple religions in the family?" (let students give their opinions, when students say yes to the question continue)

- “I agree with you, many students have backgrounds in more than one religion. Speaking of religion, that is what our next unit will be. I’m going to write the names of five religions on the board (Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism).” (1 min)

- Modified Think-Pair-Share: (20 min)

-First have students jot down what they already know about the different religions. (2 min)

- “Now I would like you to discuss your ideas about these religions with your shoulder partner.”

- Assign each of the five table groups to one religion each and have them write their ideas on the board under the appropriate religion. (10 min)

- Have a class discussion about their ideas. Point out correct and incorrect points, and explain that it is alright if students do not know much about these religions yet. (8 min)

- “This unit is very important. It is important for all of you to understand the different religions of the world. Religion is an important part of culture. Religion can be a very sensitive and personal subject. There have been many wars fought over religion, but in *our* classroom, we will welcome and respect the rights and ideas of people who follow all religions.”

*Closure (1-5 min):* “For homework I would like all of you to come up with a question that you have about any of these world religion. You don’t have to write your name on your paper. Tomorrow I will post all of your questions on the bulletin board, and through the week, other students will be able to go to the bulletin board and write down the answer to your question as we learn more about these religions. You each have to post one answer. When you post your answer, you will write your name on the sheet at the bottom of the bulletin board, you should not write your name by your answer. If you can’t seem to find an answer, you can ask another student or I for help.. At the end of the unit, we will try to figure out any unanswered questions as a class.”

Assessments Used: Informally assesses what the students write on the board, and what they say in small and whole group discussions. For the bulletin board question (homework activity), periodically monitor the answers that are posted to make sure they are correct (if an answer is found to be incorrect, go over that question with the class, and have them see if they can come up with a more appropriate answer). Make sure that every student has answered a question, by looking at the list of names on the bulletin board.

“If Time” Activity: Have a whole group discussion about some of the questions students would like answered during the unit.

Extension/ Practice Beyond Lesson: The extension/ practice beyond the lesson is the bulletin board question homework activity and concurrent answering of questions throughout the week.

Reflection:

## Lesson Plan 2:

Title: Discovering the World's Religions Using Multiple Intelligences

New York State Learning Standards:

**Standard 2:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives. **Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. **Performance Indicator:** know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures. **Key Idea 3:** Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involved learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. **Performance Indicator:** investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices throughout world history. **Key Idea 4:** The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain that importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time. **Performance Indicator:** view history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

**Standard 3:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live- local, national, and global- including the distribution of people, places, and environment over the earth's surface.

**Key Idea 1:** Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. **Performance Indicator:** map information about people, places, and environments.

Desired Student Outcomes: Students will be able to estimate where the areas of origin for the five discussed religions (Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam) are. Students will relate to a religious figure. Students will compare music and photographs of festivities from the religions. Students analyze facts about each religion and be able to group the religions into monotheistic or polytheistic.

Lesson Rationale: This lesson is meant to give students a chance to explore five of the world's great religions through multiple intelligences. If students can understand and value other religions, they will be more tolerant towards people and culture who believe in that religion.

Prior Knowledge Needed: The knowledge of how to work at learning centers in cooperative learning groups. The knowledge that the prefix mon- refers to singular, and poly-refers to many. A basic knowledge of religions as was determined during lesson 1.

Resources and Material Needed: Writing utensils, religious music (*Tibetan Prayer Chants, Om: The Sound of Hindu, Judaism in Music & Song, Instrumental Praise: Majesty, Sufi chants from Cairo*), photographs of religious festivals, fact sheets about the religions and important figures in the religions, a guest that can teach students a few basic yoga moves, a map of the world, scrap paper, CD or cassette players with headphones for four students.

Lesson Timeline:

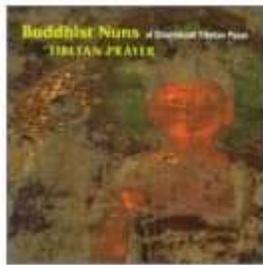
*Motivational Introduction* (1-2 min): "Yesterday we started to learn about the five great religions of the world, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. We also discussed the fact that all religions are equally valuable, and that we need to respect the people who practice them. Today we are going to start learning more about these religions in our learning centers, so that you have a better understanding and appreciation of their

cultures. I am going to pass out some puzzle pieces. When I start to play this Buddhist chant music, I would like you to move around the room, trading puzzle pieces and greeting your fellow students. When the music stops, hold onto which ever piece you are left with.” *Music Plays for about 30 seconds. Music Stops.* Okay, now find the other students who have the same colored puzzle piece as you. When you find your group, put the puzzle pieces together to find what center you start be at.” (The pieces spell out: MUSIC, MAPS, CULTURE, YOGA, FACTS, and PEOPLE, these words are also on the centers). “You will have about 7 minutes to explore each center, there is a piece of scrap paper for everyone to jot down notes about any thoughts or feelings about the stations. You should take a few notes, because there will be a worksheet tonight.”

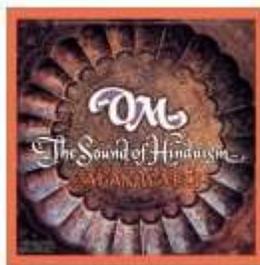
*Detailed Sequence of Learning Experiences (40 min):*

-Students will spend approximately 7 minutes at each of the centers below. Students are advised to jot down some notes at each station, because they will have a worksheet to complete for homework about the stations. The teacher will be working with students at the mapping center, and a physical education guest teacher will be working with students at the yoga center. These teachers will also keep their eyes open to monitor the room. Students have worked together in cooperative groups at learning centers before, and know that they are encouraged to share what they are finding with other students, or to ask other students for assistance if they need it. At each center a sheet will list the directions for the center.

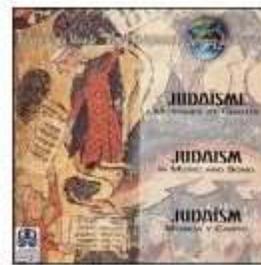
- 1) **Musical:** Students will sample music from five religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and jot down their feelings about the music.



**BUDDHISM**  
Tibetan Prayer Chants  
 By: the Buddhist Nuns  
 at Chuchikjall



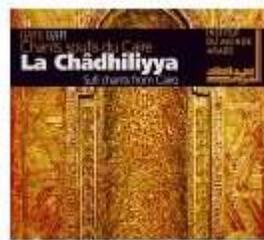
**HINDUISM**  
Om: The Sound of Hinduism  
 By: Alan Watts



**JUDAISM**  
Judaism in Music & Song  
 By: Va-Judaism



**CHRISTIANITY**  
Instrumental Praise: Majesty  
 By: Various Artists



**ISLAM**  
Sufi Chants from Cairo  
 By: La Confrerie  
 Chadhiliyya

- 2) **Geography/Spatial:** With the teacher, students will go over the areas of origin for each of the five religions. (See attached map). Students will locate the approximate areas of origin for each religion. Geographic reasons for these locations will be brought to the students’ attention (ex: water bodies, mountain ranges). Students will see a map of the current locations where the religions are located (in the Kids book of World Religions). The group will discuss the reasons for the dispersal of the religions. (For example, Judaism spreading to America because of the genocide brought on by Hitler in Europe.)

3) **Intrapersonal:** Students will read profiles of some important figures in the religions, and jot down any thing they find interesting about the figures (Each profile has a question to get students thinking written in italics). Students will get a copy of this. (Descriptions from the Kids book of World Religions)

**HINDUISM → MAHATMA GANDHI:** Mahatma Gandhi, who was born in India in 1869, believed deeply in non-violence. His ideas were influenced by the Hindu belief that all life is sacred. Gandhi developed methods such as peaceful demonstrations and hunger strikes to protest injustice. Under his leadership, India was freed from British rule in 1947. Gandhi was assassinated in 1948. He has inspired many other activists, including Martin Luther King Jr., the American civil-rights leader.

*How would you act if you had to peacefully lead your followers while others tried to*

**BUDDHISM → DALAI LAMA:** The Dalai Lama is the head of the main branch of Tibetan Buddhism. There have been fourteen Dalai Lamas. The first, who lived in the 1400s, was believed to be the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in human form. Each Dalai Lama since has been seen as a reincarnation of the previous one.

The current Dalai Lama was born in 1935 in China. As a child, he showed who he was by identifying objects that had belonged to the previous Dalai Lama. He was enthroned in Tibet in 1940. He acted as a religious and political leader until 1950, when the Chinese took over Tibet. In 1959, the Dalai Lama and thousands of his followers escaped to India. In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for his efforts to end the Chinese rule of Tibet.

*What would you feel if you had to flee your home in order to practice your religion?*

**CHRISTIANITY → MOTHER TERESA:** Christian nuns and monks lead lives of contemplation and prayer, but they also work with people in need. Mother Teresa was a Roman Catholic nun who moved from Yugoslavia to India. Joined by a group of dedicated nuns, she spent fifty years caring for poor children and dying people in Calcutta and elsewhere. She inspired people around the world to offer their help and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

*Would you give up everything you had to help other less fortunate people? Why or why not.*

**ISLAM → MUHAMMAD:** Muhammad was born about 570 C.E. in Mecca, in what is now the country of Saudi Arabia. In 622 C.E. he was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina, a city a short distance to the north. This flight, called the Hijra, marks the first year of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad invited people, including Christians and Jews, to become Muslims. He gradually became a powerful leader with a growing Islamic empire.

*If you felt you had a good idea, would you share it with anyone? Even if you don't always see eye to eye?*

4) **Linguistic:** Students will orally compare fact sheets about each religion. (Facts from the Kids book of World Religions). Students will get a copy of these with their worksheet.

### HINDUISM



Followers: 900 million

Locations: India, Nepal, South Africa, Europe, North America, Southeast Asia.

Gods: Brahma (supreme spirit) and thousands of Gods and Goddesses.

Scriptures: Vedas, Upanishads, epic poems.

Places of Worship: temples.

Religious Leaders: gurus (teachers), brahmins (priests), sadhus (holy men)

Festivals: Diwali, Holi.

### ISLAM



Followers: 1.3 billion

Locations: Middle East, North and West Africa, Southeastern Europe, Central Asia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia.

Major Branches: Sunni, Shi'ite.

God: One God (Allah)

Founder: Muhammad

Scripture: Qur'an

Places of Worship: mosques

Religious leaders: imams

Festivals: Festival of Fast Breaking, Festival of Sacrifice.

### BUDDHISM



Followers: 360 million

Locations: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Bhutan, Tibet, Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Taiwan, Europe, North American.

Major Branches: Theravada, Mahayana.

Founder: Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha).

Scriptures: Tripitaka, Mahayana scriptures.

Places of Worship: shrines, temples, and monasteries.

Religious Leaders: monks and nuns, lamas.

Festivals: Birth, death, and enlightenment of Buddha.

### CHRISTIANITY



Followers: 2 billion

Locations: Europe, North America, South America, Australia, Russia, Southern Africa, parts of Asia.

Major Branches: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant.

God: One God

Founder: Jesus

Scripture: Bible

Places of Worship: chapels, churches, and cathedrals.

Festivals: Christmas, Easter

### JUDAISM



Followers: 14 million

Locations: Israel, Russia, Europe, North America

Major Branches: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform

God: one God

Founders: Abraham, Moses

Scriptures: Torah, Talmud

Places of Worship: temples, synagogues

Religious Leaders: rabbis

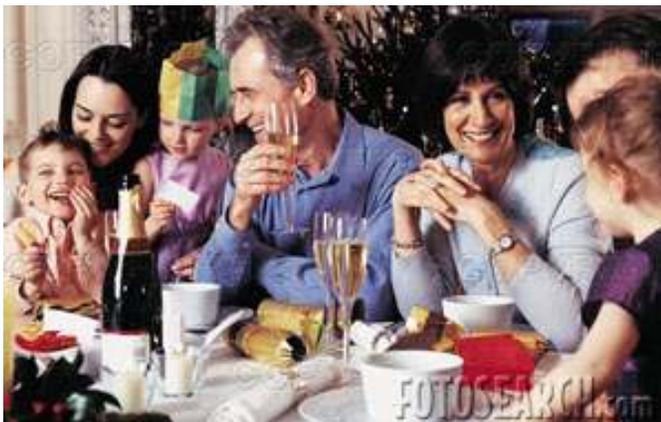
Festivals: Rosh Hashanah (new year), Yom Kippur (day of atonement), Passover, Hannukah

5) **Interpersonal:** Students will orally discuss pictures showing customs from the religions. (pictures from [www.encycarta.com](http://www.encycarta.com), descriptions from The Kids Book of World Religions). Students should jot down notes.



### Passover – Judaism

In the spring, Passover reminds Jews of the time that the Israelite children were saved from death before their escape to Egypt. On the first night of Passover, they place special foods on the dinner table. One is flatbread called matzo, used because the Israelites had no time to let bread rise before they had to escape. In addition, there are bitter herbs for the suffering of Israelites, and egg for new life, a fruit and nut mixture for the mortar they used to build the pyramids, and wine for the joy they felt at escape.



### Christmas- Christianity

At Christmas, people celebrate Jesus' birth. No one knows his exact birth date, but Christians have chosen December 25 as the date. The season begins with advent, four Sundays before Christmas. This is a time of preparations. Children often receive special advent calendars with windows to open each day until Christmas.



### Ramadan – Islam

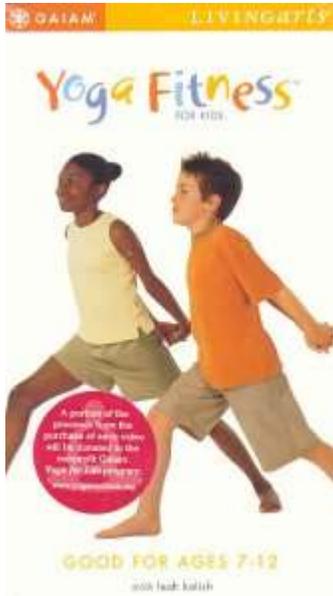
Ramadan is the month when adults fast from dawn to dusk. Children may fast for short periods, which get longer as they grow up. Muslims feel that fasting teaches self-discipline and helps people understand and care for others.



### Marriage Ceremony- Hinduism

Traditionally, a Hindu couple's parents arrange their marriage. Parents often prefer that the bride and groom come from the same area, belong to the same caste (class) and speak the same language. They may also check the young people's horoscopes to make sure they suit each other.

6) **Kinesthetic:** Students will learn a few basic yoga moves. A physical educator will be a guest in the class to teach the students (a high school student, parent, or student teacher who knows some yoga moves would also work, or an individual who can supervise students doing a yoga video). Have soothing music in the background. When planning the moves to teach the students, keep in mind students with disabilities, for example, if there is a student in a wheelchair, focus on arm stretches. When students are done, they should jot down how the yoga made them feel.



Have the person teaching the students explain that: Yoga has its origins in the Hindu religions. In artwork, many Hindu gods are portrayed in yoga positions. Yoga is also healthy and relaxing.

*Closure* (1-5 min): “It’s time to wrap up at the last center. I will keep these centers on the back tables, if any of you want to keep discovering them during free time. I hope that you all enjoyed learning different aspects about these five great religions, you seemed to be having fun! Is there anything you particularly enjoyed? (listen to student responses) Well, I’m glad you had fun! Let’s thank Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ your physical education teacher for helping out with a round of applause. Can anyone tell Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ something they learned about yoga today? It was really great that she showed you those yoga moves, wasn’t it? Okay, I am going to pass out a worksheet for you to do as homework tonight. Tomorrow we will continue learning about these great religions!”

Assessments Used: The worksheet that students have for homework will be assessed (worksheet is attached, worksheet is 5 points, 1 points per question; graded worksheet will be returned to students the next day), and the teacher will informally asses students at the centers. At the mapping station, the students will color in blank maps with the areas of origin. These maps will be informally viewed by the teacher.

“If Time” Activity: Have a whole group discussion about the new information that the students learned.

Extension/ Practice Beyond Lesson: The centers will be left up at the back of the classroom, in case students want to keep learning about them when they have free time. The worksheet is also practice beyond the lesson, it serves to keep students thinking about what they learned at the centers overnight.

Reflection:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## World Religions Learning Centers Worksheet

1) When you were listening to the music, what did you notice? Were there any differences or similarities?

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2) Choose one of the religious figures (Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Mother Theresa, or Muhammad) and compare yourself to that person. Have you went through similar struggles in your life? Are there certain traits you think you share?

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3) After looking at your fact sheets, please place the religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) in to the appropriate group.

Monotheistic (one god)

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Polytheistic (many gods)

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4) What did you notice that the pictures of customs from each religion had in common? Why do you think that all of the religions have this in common?

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5) How did you feel after doing yoga? Do you think that yoga has the same affects on Hindu worshippers?

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### **Lesson Plan 3:**

Title: Religion Sleuths

Learning Standards:

**Standard 3:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface. **Key Idea 1:** Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. **Performance Indicator:** students will investigate why people and places are located where they are located and what patterns can be perceived in these locations.

**Standard 2:** Students will: use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives. **Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. **Performance Indicator:** students will know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations. **Key Idea 2:** Establishing timeframes, exploring different periodizations, examining themes across time and within cultures, and focusing on important turning points in world history help organize the study of world cultures and civilizations. **Performance Indicator:** students will develop timelines by placing important events and developments in world history in their correct chronological order. **Key Idea 3:** Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. **Performance Indicators:** students will investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices throughout world history, students will interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Desired Student Outcomes: As a group, students will research a certain religion and prepare a poster and presentation summarizing the facts about an assigned religion. Students will perform internet and book research.

Lesson Rationale: This lesson serves to give students a deeper understanding of religions through cooperative group work. It gives students an opportunity to practice research and teamwork skills.

Prior Knowledge Needed: How to locate information on the internet (how to use search engines, how to distinguish reliable web-site: .edu, .gov, .org). Students already in their heterogeneous cooperative learning groups (each group has mixed ability levels, gender, and race. These groups are changed every month). Some knowledge of the world’s religions as studied in the prior 2 lessons.

Resources and Materials Needed: a librarian to help students who are having trouble, computers for every student, a computer that shows up on the overhead for the teacher to use, scrap paper, writing utensils, chart paper, markers.

Lesson Timeline:

*Motivational Introduction (1-2 min):* “Hello! First of all I would like you to greet your table members and ask them about their nights (1 min). Today we are going to go to the library and begin researching the religions. I’m going to come around and I would like the person with the closest birthday in each group to pick a piece of paper from the hat. The paper you pick has the name of the religion you will be studying on it.”

*Detailed Sequence of Learning Experiences (40 min): (In the Library)*

-“Yesterday we had the opportunity to explore five different religions in our learning center. Today we are going to continue our exploration in the library.”

“I’m going to pass a handout to each group giving you guidelines for the project.”

- “You should work together to find the information, but you will each choose the certain aspect you would like to present. Your grade will be based 75% on the whole group poster and presentation, and 25% on your individual part of the presentation. There are four sections, and each group member will choose a section to focus on. The group will work together to create a poster and presentation. I will be looking for you to find and present the correct factual information listed on your guidelines, and for you to create an attractive poster that explains the information you find as well. If you find any interesting facts that are not listed on the guidelines, feel free to add them in to your poster and presentation. If you are having trouble, the librarian, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ or I would be glad to help you out. On this table we have gathered some books that may be helpful to you. We also have a list of good websites, poster board, and markers for you to use.” (websites: [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com), [worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/index.html](http://worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/index.html), [www.yahooligans.com](http://www.yahooligans.com), [www.ajkids.com](http://www.ajkids.com))

*Closure(1-5 min):* “From what I have seen, you are all off to a great start. If you need more time to research your project in the library, I can give you a pass to go during recess or study time. You can also use the computer in the classroom for research.”

Assessments Used: Asses the students’ posters and presentations as stated (75% of grade based on group work, 25% based on individual section). Assessment is based on factuality and presentation of information. Grades will be returned to students three days after they are handed in.

“If Time” Activity: If there is extra time, allow students to continue researching their religion.

Extension/ Practice Beyond Lesson: Students will be able to use the library during their study and free time. Students will be given time and materials in class to put their posters together. Students will report their posters/presentations to the class next.

Reflection:

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Religion being studied: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Create a poster and brief presentation to report to the class about your religion. You should all work together, but choose one partner each to report on the following topics:

Partner 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
PEOPLE: Founder (if any), Other important figures [with brief descriptions]

Partner 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
IDEAS: Important Beliefs, Names of holy Texts

Partner 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
GEOGRAPHY: Where the religion originated, Where it is found today [what are some reasons for this dispersal?]

Partner 4: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIMELINE: Create a timeline of the most important events of the religion

*Your grade will be on information and presentation of the material you present and is based 75% on your group presentation/poster, and 25% on your individual section.*

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## **Lesson Plan 4**

**Title:** A Journey to Nepal

(adapted from [www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions) lesson plan, "Religion and Spirituality in Nepal.")

### **New York State Learning Standards:**

**Standard 3:** Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface. **Key Idea 1:** Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. **Performance Indicator:** students will investigate why people and places are located where they are located and what patterns can be perceived in these locations.

**Standard 2:** Students will: use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives. **Key Idea 1:** The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives. **Performance Indicator:** students will know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

**Desired Student Outcomes:** Students will: 1) explain why Nepal is primarily a Hindu country, 2) explain the meaning of the statement on Nepalese "spiritual richness," 3) explore National Geographic's Trekking Nepal site and take notes on Nepalese religious customs and practices and on evidence of Nepalese "spiritual richness," 4) compare and contrast the openness and prominence of religious practices and "spiritual richness" in Nepal with those in the students' home country.

**Lesson Rationale:** This lesson asks students to contemplate the meaning of a statement regarding Nepalese religion and spirituality and to look for evidence of religious customs and "spiritual richness" observed during National Geographic’s online journey, “One American’s Trek Through Nepal”. The students will conclude by comparing and contrasting these factors in Nepal with their own country.

**Prior Knowledge Needed:** Ability to use a computer and the Internet. Understanding of the basic aspects of the world’s religions as studied in the prior 3 lessons.

**Resources and Materials Needed:** Computers for every student, a computer that shows up on an overhead screen for teacher use, scrap paper and writing utensils.

### **Lesson Timeline:**

*Motivational Introduction (1-5 min):* “We have been studying the various religions of the world. Today we are going to focus specifically on Hinduism. We are going to use [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com) to take a tour of Nepal. Hinduism is the primary religion in Nepal, practiced by 90% of Nepalese people. In fact, Nepal is the only official Hindu state in the world. What other country is primarily Hindu?” (Answer= India). Have students look at Nepal's location on a map (on overhead) and discuss the possible reasons why this small country has such an overwhelmingly Hindu population (For example, isolated from other countries by mountain ranges and rivers).

*Detailed Sequence of Learning Experiences (40 min):*

- Have students click on the "A City of Contrasts" link from the Kathmandu section of National Geographic's Trekking Nepal site and read the text. What do they think the author means when she writes that "despite extreme poverty and substandard living conditions, these people are spiritually rich beyond measure"? Discuss the students' ideas about this statement. In particular, discuss what it means to be "spiritually rich" Can a person be rich without having much money or many possessions? (10 min)
- Explain that the author is expressing two main ideas in this statement. She is commenting on the relatively prominent role of religious practices in Nepalese daily life, and also on the fact that, based on her observations, the Nepalese seem to lead full lives despite not having a lot of money or possessions. Have students explore all or part of the Trekking Nepal site to find evidence that supports the statement. They should look for: 1) signs of religious customs and observances, and 2) evidence of the Nepalese leading fulfilling lives, despite being poor by U.S. standards. (2 min)
- Have them take notes on what they see, ideally finding at least two examples for each of the points above. These sections of the trek will be particularly relevant: "Kathmandu: The Living Goddess," "Kathmandu: A City of Contrasts," and "Landruk: Gallery—Local Life Along the Trail." (14 min)

**Trekking Nepal:** <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/01/nomad/nepal/intro.html>

**Nepal Fact Book:** <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/np.html>

- Ask students to describe the extent to which religion is a part of everyday life in their own country. What are the differences between what they have learned about Nepalese culture and what they have experienced at home? What are the reasons for these differences (e.g., diversity of religions in the United States and separation of church and state in contrast to one official religion)? (14 min)

*Closure (1-5 min):* Discuss students' observations of Nepalese "spiritual richness." Why do they think the author commented on this? Do they think people in their own country have the same level of "spiritual richness"? Do people in their own country tend to be content to lead relatively simple lives with few possessions?

Assesments Used: During the lesson informally asses students as they explore the website. Ask students to write a two- to three-paragraph essay (due next week) comparing and contrasting what they have learned about Nepalese religion and spirituality with their observations of these factors in their own country. Their essays should address the following questions: 1)What types of religious practices and customs are noticeable on a trek in Nepal, and how would those practices compare to what a foreigner would see on a tour of the students' own country? 2)What evidence would students see on a trek in Nepal to indicate that most Nepalese people lead seemingly fulfilling lives even though they don't have a lot of money or possessions? How do those observations compare to what students have noticed in their own country? Do they think people in their own country, in general, are just as content as the Nepalese to make do with few luxuries? Graded essays will be returned to students three days after they are handed in.

"If Time" Activity: If there is extra time, allow students to explore more of the Nepal trek.

Extension/ Practice Beyond Lesson: Have an American Hindu guess speaker come in so students can learn about some of their traditional religious and spiritual practices. They should ask about religious ceremonies, holidays, and customs. How does this person compare his or her home culture to North American culture?

## Lesson 5: Learning Centers

My sub-topics are: and matching the religions/descriptions with an artifact that corresponds, and mapping the areas of origin for each religion.

The artifacts used in the matching activity include paintings, sculpture, and books. I obtained the pictures from [www.encycarta.com](http://www.encycarta.com). The matching activity is for a small group to work on. The students can check themselves, by making sure their matches have the same letters on the back (student-based self assessment). My desired student outcome is that students will be able to connect the religion with an artifact that corresponds with the religion. I tried to select artifacts that did not seem to have more than one religion they could be matched with.

The mapping activity is for an individual to work on, but they can ask each other for help if they are stuck (\*teacher assessment, would be watched and collected by me). Students will use the color code to color in the area for each religion. My desired student outcome for this activity is for students to demonstrate that they can estimate the areas of origin for each studied religion.

The matching activity is displayed in an envelope with the directions on the outside. The mapping activity is displayed in a manila envelope with directions on the envelope and maps for each student inside of the envelope.

\*For the teacher assessment I would compare the students answers to the key (the map I used to show students the areas of origin for each religion on day 2). Students do not need to perfectly place each religion, but need to show an understanding for the general area of origin.