

Comparing World Religions Using Primary Sources



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Lawrence & Houseworth, . *Jewish Synagogue on Mason Street, San Francisco*. 1866. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Web. 16 Jan. 2013.

One of the expectations for 7th grade students is that they need to be able to identify and describe the beliefs of the 5 major world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. This lesson is designed to provide an opportunity for students to use many primary sources from the Library of Congress that display aspects of all 5 of these religions. In addition, the lesson will reinforce the concept that all of these religions share similar characteristics including a sacred place, sacred text(s), traditions, festivals or holidays, and religious symbols.

Overview	
Objectives	Students will work with a partner to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Examine numerous pictures depicting worship practices of Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, and Muslims.● Complete a chart with their observations of sacred place(s), sacred text(s), festivals and/or holiday(s), and symbol(s) for each of the five religions.● Compare and contrast similarities and differences among the major world religions based on their observations of the images.
Recommended time frame	Two class periods
Grade level	7th
Curriculum fit	Social Studies
Materials	Computer and online access to World Religion Activity PowerPoint through teacher website. (one computer for every two students) Chart titled “Comparing World Religions”—one for every two students. Writing utensil (one per student) (Partner for discussion)

<p>Michigan State Learning Standards</p>	
	<p>Social Studies: Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● H1.2.1. Explain how historians use a variety of sources to explore the past (e.g., artifacts, primary and secondary sources including narratives, technology, historical maps, visual/mathematical quantitative data, radiocarbon dating, DNA analysis). ● W3.2.1 Identify and describe the beliefs of the five major world religions.
<p>Procedures</p>	
	<p>Day One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students should be assigned to pairs prior to moving to the computer lab. Assign partners to share a computer ● Direct students to the open the PowerPoint presentation found on the teacher website. ● Students will follow four directions found on the website: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Guess which religion is represented by each image. On your paper, record your guesses using the following multiple choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Hinduism B. Buddhism C. Judaism D. Christianity E. Islam 2 Click each image one at a time and discover if you guessed correctly. Record the name of the religion and more specific name of the image, if provided 3 Look carefully at each individual image. (Most of these are primary documents found in the Library of Congress.) With a partner, discuss what you see. Pay attention to small details! Describe what you notice on your sheet. Be thorough! 4 Answer the final question(s) on your sheet which ask you to make connections between many of the pictures. <p>Day Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will continue where they finished on day one, most likely halfway or more through step three. ● End with a group discussion of common findings. ● Students will submit their work for evaluation.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Upon student completion of the “Comparing World Religions” chart, the teacher will use the rubric provided (Comparing World Religions Activity Rubric) to score the assignment (rubric evaluates the use of primary sources and the accuracy of the description of the religious elements).</p>

Extension

Students create a Venn diagram and a brief one minute presentation identifying similarities and differences between two of the religions displayed in these primary sources. Students should be prepared to present the similarities and differences as well as justify their examples using knowledge gained from these primary sources.

Historical Background

Religion has helped shape the cultural diversity among people around the world. Specifically, the people of the Middle East and South Asia have given the world 5 of the world's major religions. Teachers who use a regional focus to study the Eastern Hemisphere have the opportunity to analyze both the physical and human characteristics of Asia by comparing cultural constructs such as religion.

Primary Resources from the Library of Congress

See World Religions Primary Resource Table.

Names: _____

Date: _____ Hour: _____

Comparing World Religions Activity Rubric

_____/1 pts. Part One: Record of guesses
(based on completion, not correctness)

_____/20 pts. Part Three: Description of 20 images
(based on thorough details of each picture, including vivid adjectives which note size, color, style of dress, peoples' actions, etc. One point per full box of description.)

_____/5 pts. Sacred Place(s)

_____/5 pts. Sacred Text(s)

_____/5 pts. Festivals and/or Holiday(s)

_____/5 pts. Symbol(s)

(3-4 points per characteristic = minimal details; boxes may be half empty)

_____/5 pts. Part Four: Answers to cross-religion questions
(based on thoughtful comparison of the five religions and four characteristics; complete sentence answers note similarities among at least two religions for each characteristic.)

(3-4 points = minimal comparisons not written in complete sentences)

_____/26 pts. Total

Handouts

Names: _____, _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Comparing World Religions

Access the powerpoint titled “Comparing World Religions” in your teacher’s website. Follow the steps provided in the first few slides. Record your guesses (step one) in the first row of the chart below.

Work with a partner to examine the images provided (step three). Complete the chart with your observations. What do you notice in each picture? Use vivid adjectives to describe each image, noting such details as size, color, people’s actions, dress, etc.

	Sacred Place(s)	Sacred Text(s)	Festivals and/or Holiday(s)	Symbol(s)
	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Hinduism				
Buddhism				

Judaism				
Christianity				
Islam				

Answer the following questions based on your observations (step four):

1. Do all the sacred places have characteristics in common? Explain.

2. Do all the sacred texts have characteristics in common? Explain.

3. Do all the festivals and holidays have characteristics in common? Explain.

4. Do all the symbols have characteristics in common? Explain.

5. What characteristics do all major world religions have in common?
