

Growth and Development of World Religions

Lesson Abstract

A world religion unites people of different cultural traditions and languages and is “portable” in that adherents are not bound or tied to one particular place to practice the faith. Unlike many ancient religions and belief systems that were tied to worshiping in a particular place, adherents of the major world belief systems – Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and eventually Islam– were able to relocate and still retain their connections to their gods and fully practice their religion. This altered the type and quality of peoples’ thinking, where they viewed their existence in a context that transcended time. These new belief systems had distinctive beliefs, texts, and rituals; yet each shaped cultures by developing ethical practices and establishing codes within which diverse people were able to communicate and interact. Thus, this unit is a comparative look at the major world religions. After examining the origins of the major world religions, students will evaluate the concept of, “world religion”, by comparing common characteristics and exploring their growth.

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- Six major world religions spread throughout the world.
- As religion spread geographically, it also facilitated cultural diffusion amongst diverse groups of people.
- This cultural and geographical mixing resulted in challenges and reactions.
- Religion greatly influenced people’s perception of the world.

Instructional Resources

Equipment:

Means to project a computer image
Computer lab

Student Resource:

1. Computer map that gives a brief history of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism with their spread and conflicts. <http://www.mapsofwar.com/ind/history-of-religion.html>
2. List of Library of Congress web sites
3. Graphic organizer for students to record their findings
4. Map of the world to complete geography activity.

Content Expectations or Standards

- WHG F3:** Growth and Development of World Religions - Explain the way that the world religions or belief systems of Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam grew, including
- spatial representations of that growth
 - interactions with culturally diverse peoples
 - responses to the challenges offered by contact with different faiths
 - ways they influenced people’s perceptions of the world.

Key Concepts

Buddhism
Confucianism
Islam
Monotheism
Philosophy

Christianity
Hinduism
Judaism
Polytheism
World Religion

Teacher Resource

Map that gives a brief history of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism with their spread and conflicts. <http://www.mapsofwar.com/ind/history-of-religion.html>

This is a reference chart to use to assist students. It is known as the, "Big Religion Chart":
http://www.religionfacts.com/big_religion_chart.htm

Use this link to print out blank country maps for students:
http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/world_country.pdf

For Assessment Question #1:

- <http://atheism.about.com/od/religionnonreligion/a/philosophy.htm>
- <http://studiedocumenten.googlepages.com/TheRelationshipbetweenPhilosophyandR.pdf>

For Assessment Question #2:

- <http://www.cultureandreligion.com/>
- http://www.religioustolerance.org/var_rel.htm

For Assessment Question #3:

- **Crusades:** <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/bible/crusades.stm>
- <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1k.html>
- **Reformation:** <http://www.reformation.org/>
- <http://www.lepq.org/religion.htm>
- **India/Pakistan Conflicts:** <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/indo-pak.htm>
- <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~nmonasch/pakistan-india%20conflict.html>
- **Arab-Israeli Conflicts:** <http://www.science.co.il/arab-israeli-conflict.asp>
- <http://www.adl.org/ISRAEL/record/conflicts.asp>

Lesson Sequence (Plan on 3 days):

Personal connections/Scanning for prior knowledge:

- Have students take out a sheet of paper and give them an oral survey where students write down what comes to mind. This is a quick write, so only allocate a short amount of time for each answer.
- Survey Questions:
 - A. Does God or exist or not?
 - B. What happens to people after they die? What do you base your answer on?
 - C. Do you believe in reincarnation? Why or why not?
 - D. Do you believe in angels? Why or why not?
 - E. How important is religion in your everyday life?
- After 5 minutes, have students turn their papers over for the second half of the survey. Tell them write down what they know, or think they know, about the following six religions:
 - A. Christianity
 - B. Islam
 - C. Judaism
 - D. Hinduism
 - E. Buddhism
 - F. Confucianism
- After the ten minutes of surveying, engage the class in a discussion over each of the first five questions. Inevitably, this will create strong emotions, connections and divisions within the class. Emphasize what a powerful social force religion is now and explain that it was as powerful, if not more so, throughout world history.
- Briefly, have students share what they know about the six religions. Most likely there will be false notions or little knowledge regarding the religions. After this, submit to the students the graphic organizer listed below this step and take the class to the computer lab or prepare to project your computer's image on a screen.
- Once you arrive in the lab, students should be given 3 items (labeled A, B, and C), in order to complete the following assignment:
 - a.. Use the Library of Congress web site to explore and investigate Six World religions. Fill in the graphic organizer and answer how many people world-wide follow the religion, their perception of deity, their customs and practices and dogma (core beliefs).
 - b. Use the world map and label where in the world these six religions are practices.
 - c. Answer the final assessment questions.
 - d. Staple the graphic organizer, the world map and the assessment questions together and turn them in by _____.

This assignment should take 3 days and using your discretion break up the computer time with lecture, student sharing and discussion. Please refer to the teacher resources regarding resources to answer the 3 assessment questions.

A. Library of Congress resources to use to complete your graphic organizer:

The most comprehensive and primary web site you will use is www.religionfacts.com. In addition to the religion facts site, we will use the Portals to the World Site to use countries as case studies to further illuminate these world religions.

1. Christianity:

Catholic: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/european/vatican/resources/va-religion.html>

Protestant: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/main/uk/religion.html>

2. Islam: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/saudiarabia/resources/saudiarabia-religion.html>

3. Judaism: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/israel/resources/israel-religion.html>

4. Hinduism: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/asian/india/resources/india-religion.html>

5. Buddhism: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/asian/thailand/resources/thailand-religion.html>

6. Confucianism: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/confuciu.htm>

B. Graphic organizer:

RELIGION	# OF ADHERANTS	MONOTHEISTIC OR POLYTHEISTIC? DEITY/DEITIES	CUSTOMS/PRACTICES	DOGMA
Christianity				
Islam				
Judaism				
Hinduism				
Buddhism				
Confucianism				

C. In addition to the graphic organizers:

Use the site http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/world_country.pdf and have students print a map and label where in the world these religions are practiced and where it spread.

D. Assessment Questions:

Answer these questions using complete sentences, typed out on Microsoft Word in 12-point font.

1. What discerns a philosophy from a religion? What do they share in common?
2. How did the spread of religion also facilitate the spread of culture?
3. Cultural and geographical mixing resulted in challenges and reactions. Please give a synopsis of four examples of this:
 - a. The Crusades
 - b. The Reformation
 - c. The conflicts between India and Pakistan
 - d. Arab-Israeli conflicts of the last 60 years.