WORLD RELIGIONS

In Search of the Light

Purpose/Overview

Students will compare and contrast key concepts of the major world religions.

National Geography Standards from "Geography for Life"

Standard 10. The characteristics, distribution,, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaic.

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

Content Standard 3: The student will identify the characteristics, distribution and demographic patterns of human populations and systems of the Eastern Hemisphere.

3. *Evaluate the impact of a region's major religions, including geographic hearths, major beliefs, customs, and the significance of religion in contemporary societies, explain how religion can both unify and divide people.*

Objectives

- *Students will compare and contrast the major world religions and have a better understanding of religions.*

Major world religions

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism
- Sikhism
- Jainism
- Baha'i
- Shinto
- Chinese traditional: Taoism, Confucianism
- Primal-indigenous: animists, tribal/ethnic religionists

five characteristics that world religions seem to share

- a belief in some kind of deity or supreme being (ex. God or Jehovah)
- a code of conduct for individuals and groups of people (ex. prohibition against murder)
- religious rituals or ceremonies (ex. baptism or marriage)
- a doctrine of salvation (ex. being forgiven for sins)
- a sacred text of stories of a holy book (ex. Bible or Quran)

Christianity

Background

- A small sect of Jews believed that Jesus was the Messiah.
- The message spread quickly among Jews and Gentiles after men like Paul began teaching.
- Paul taught that Jesus was the New Covenant for everyone and that the law of the Old Testament no longer applied.
- Christianity is one of three Abrahamic religions, which include Judaism and Islam, because they all believe in the God of Abraham and are monotheistic, or a belief in one God.
- Christianity is the largest religion today and has many different sects, including Catholicism and Protestantism.

Christianity

Beliefs

Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, and also that he was crucified, but rose again, to save the souls of mankind.

Islam

Background

- Islam means submission in Arabic.
- The Prophet Muhammad was visited by the Angel Gabriel who gave him a message in Arabic from God. This message was later put into writing and is now known as the Quran.
- Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world and is the second largest, behind Christianity.
- Islam is also one of the Abrahamic religions, along with Judaism and Christianity, and is monotheistic.

Islam

Beliefs

- Muslims (people who follow Islam) believe and follow the Five Pillars of Islam which are:

  1) Testimony – A declaration of faith. One says and believes "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad was his prophet," in order to become a Muslim.

  2) Prayer – A Muslim must pray towards Mecca five times a day.

  3) Charity – A Muslim must give to the poor. Usually between 2.5-10% of one's income is given.

  4) Fasting – Muslims must fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

  5) Hajj – Muslims must make a pilgrimage to Mecca

Judaism

Background

- Jews believe that they are God's chosen people and that He gave them the land of Cannon.
- Abraham was their leader and they had a sacred agreement, or covenant, with God.
- They also had a mark on their bodies, circumcision.
- Jews who follow Judaism still follow the laws of the Old Testament.
- Judaism is also one of the Abrahamic religions, which also includes Christianity and Islam.
- Judaism is the fifth largest world religion.

Judaism

Beliefs

- Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Therefore, they are still waiting for the Messiah to come and they still follow the Old Testament law.
- They follow the Tanakh, which is the old Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) and use the Talmud, a book of rules, to interpret the Tanakh.

Hinduism

Background

- the Aryans invaded the Indus River Valley. The Aryans brought hymns and texts, now known to Hindus as the Vedas, that helped to start a religion that the British termed "Hinduism."
- Hindus have thousands of gods and goddesses and therefore are polytheistic. Hindus are also henotheists, believing that one god can also be another god.
- Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world and has many followers in India.

Hinduism

Beliefs

Hindus believe in reincarnation and karma, the idea that what you did in your previous life resulted in how your life is now.

Hindus also believe in the sacred being of Brahman, but worship thousands of gods and goddesses, many for each aspect of life. There are three very important ones that are worshipped the most:

*Brahma-creator *Vishnu-love *Shiva-destroyer

Buddhism

Background

- Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was raised as a Hindu and lived a very sheltered life until he was 29. At 29 he saw suffering for the first time in four different instances: a man with a cane, a sick man who soils himself, a dead body on its way to be cremated, and a Hindu ascetic on the verge of starvation.
- He asked why? He did not see suffering as necessary or the idea of karma as the answer. After becoming an ascetic for six years and not reaching any enlightenment, Siddhartha sat under a fig tree and was tempted by Mara, a demon. He scared her away and finally reached enlightenment. The fig tree became known as the Bhodi tree.
- Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world. It is polytheistic and believes that the Buddha reincarnates. The first Buddha was Siddhartha Gautama himself.
- For the most part Buddhism is a very peaceful religion and its followers simply strive to reach enlightenment.

Buddhism

Beliefs

- Siddhartha Gautama taught his followers the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path in order to help them reach enlightenment.
- **Four Noble Truths** (how to end suffering):

1) Nothing is permanent, which leads to dissatisfaction
2) We suffer because of tanha (desire)
3) Peace comes only when tanha is gone
4) Truth can be found through the "Middle-way"

- **Eight-fold Path** (how to live your life):

Right view
Right intention
Right speech
Right action
Right livelihood
Right effort
Right mindfulness
Right concentration