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***Teaching about World Religions using the AAR Pedagogical Competencies***

***“Scavenger Hunt”***

The objective of this modified “Scavenger Hunt” is to familiarize you with the World Religions identified in the OACS, understand the key issues and challenges faced with teaching about this content in public schools, and identifying appropriate resources, best practices and skills to effectively teach about World religions. We will use the Pedagogical Competencies outlined in the AAR document

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| ***Pedagogical Competencies*** | ***Explore/Research/Reflect*** | ***Application*** |
| ***Station 1 (20 points)***   * Identify the OACS that focus on World Religions * Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media. | ***Identify the OACS. Then develop an annotated bibliography: Identify 3 Resources for each of the world religions(incl. young adolescent literature): Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism***  History Strand, Early Civilizations  2. Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today.  Geography Strand, Human Systems  8. Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).  **Buddhism**  <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/religion/buddhism.htm>  This website gives basic information about Buddhism and answers questions about the religion.  Ganeri, A. (2007). *The Sound and the Hare Heard and Other Stories: Buddhism.* QEB Publishing, Inc.,  This book provides 4 stories for students to get a better understanding of Buddhism through this picture book.  <http://www.omsakthi.org/religions.html>  This website talks about how the Buddhism was founded and gives the main points of the religion.  **Hinduism**  <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/religion/hinduism.htm>  This website gives basic information about Hinduism and answers questions about the religion.  Senker, C. (2004). *My Hindu Year.* Rosen Publishing Group.  This is a book about an 8 year olds diary through a year of events as a Hindu.  <http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/index.htm>Provides learners with basics, beliefs, history, practices, symbols, texts, and much more of the Hinduism religion.  **Islam**  Stone, C. (2005). *Islam.* Eyewitness Book Series. DK Publishing.  This book provides information about the Islam tradition and religion  <http://www.islam.com/>  This website provides articles about Islam including their sacred texts, philosophy, way of life, history, and many more aspects.  <http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/islam/religion/>  This website talks about the religion as well as shows a video of Muslims singing a prayer song.  **Christianity**  Brown, A. (2010). *Christianity.* The World Religions Series. Whitecap Books.  This book provides information about Christianity and shares many facts about the faith. The series promotes tolerance and cultural awareness.  <http://www.christianity.com/>  This website provides the reader with the faith of Christians, the history, leadership, living, and community. There are quizzes and games that can be used to help students understand more about Christianity.  <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/religion/christian.htm>  This website gives basic information about Christianity and answers questions about the religion  **Judaism**  <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/index.htm>This website provides the learner with many facts about Judaism including their beliefs, holidays, practices, and much more.  Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell for Young Readers, 1998  This story is about two young girls, one Jewish and one German, during Nazis occupation of Denmark.  <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/carolrb/judaism/judai1.html>  This website provides information about the Jewish religion. It shares information about their beliefs, worship, rituals, daily life, and much more. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  ***Buddhism:*** Buddhism is the religion of many Asian countries and has about 350 million followers worldwide. The religion is about 2,500 years old. It is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama or Buddha. After his death, his teachings were written down and this collection is a sacred book called the Tripitaka. Buddhism focuses on suffering and the need to get rid of it. Buddhist do not believe in a god or gods like other religions; they see Buddha as a man who achieved Enlightenment. They believe that Nirvana is the most enlightened state one can achieve; in this state there is no suffering. This state can only be achieved after one is reincarnated several times and then finally releases their desires. Buddhist follow the teaching of Buddha in The Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and Three Universal Truths. They believe in the 4 Noble Truths which are suffering exists, there is a cause for suffering, there is no end to suffering, and to end the suffering, Buddhists must follow the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path is a way for Buddhists to follow the right path which include the right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation. When Buddhists worship, they may worship at home or in a temple. They sit on the floor barefoot facing the image of Buddha and chant or meditate. Buddhists believe in reincarnation and that one must go through cycles of birth, life, and death. In general, Buddhists do not believe in any type of God, the need for a savior, prayer, or eternal life after death.  ***Hinduism:*** Hinduism originated in Indus River Valley in Northern India over 4000 years ago. Hinduism is the largest religion in Asia and the main religion in India. It has approximately 806 million followers worldwide. Hinduism: It does not have a founder, a single teacher, or any other prophets. Hinduism is not just one religion. It is the practice of a variety of different religious groups that come from India. For Hindus, religion is more of what you do rather than what you believe in. Hindus believe in a universal soul or God called Brahman. Brahman takes many different forms, which is why Hindus worship different gods and goddesses. Hindus also believe in reincarnation and Karma, the idea that what you do in one life determines happiness in the next life, like the Buddhists. Many Hindus believe that they have 4 goals in life which include release of the soul from the cycle of rebirth; their age allows them to complete duties, pursuit of marriage, and by doing the right thing you reincarnate yourself. There are three basic practices which include worship, cremation, and following the rules of the caste system. By worship, they are to pray, meditate, practice yoga, or read to meet the needs of worship. The caste system is a system of four levels in which Hindus are a part of but you cannot change systems until you are reborn.  ***Islam:*** Islam was founded in 622 CE, by Muhammad the Prophet, in Mecca. Islam is the second most popular religion in the world. People who practice Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe in only one god called Allah. There are two sacred texts of Islam: the Qur’an, which are the words of Allah ‘the One True God’ as given to Muhammad, and the Hadith, which is a collection of Muhammad’s sayings. The duties of all Muslims are known as the Five Pillars of Islam. They include a declaration of faith, praying 5 times daily, giving money to charity, fasting during Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca during their lifetime. Men must be covered between their waist and knees and women are to be covered from head to toe except their hands and face. Muslims follow a strict monotheism with one creator who is just, omnipotent and merciful. They also believe in Satan who drives people to sin, and that all unbelievers and sinners will spend eternity in Hell. Muslims who sincerely repent and submit to God will return to a state of sinlessness and go to Paradise after death. Alcohol, drugs, and gambling should be avoided and they reject racism. Muslims worship in a mosque or in their homes in a place called a musalla, which is a clean space for prayer. They pray 5 specific times throughout the day and face the city of Mecca.  ***Christianity:*** Christianity started out as a breakaway sect of Judaism nearly 2000 years ago. Christianity is the world’s largest religion with nearly 2.2 billion followers worldwide. It is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Christianity is made up of those people that are Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholics. This is the largest religion which makes up about 1.7 billion people. Christians worship in churches and read the Bible. The Bible shares the teachings of Jesus on how Christians should live their lives. God is the ruler of Christianity and they believe that he rules heaven and Earth. Some basic beliefs include that they all die and are resurrected from earthly bodies and judged by God; Jesus Christ is the son of God and will inherit eternal life. They worship in churches on Sunday and pray at home with individual or family devotions. They practice the Eucharist as a way of remembering Jesus. Some celebrations that occur include Baptism, which is a declaration of their faith, Easter, which is the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection, and Christmas, which is the birth of Christ. All Christians believe in heaven and that those who sincerely repent their sins before God will be saved and join Him in heaven.  ***Judaism:*** Judaism is the oldest of the major religions, but has the fewest number of followers. There are about 15 million followers in the United States, Israel, and the former Soviet Union. They believe that there is one God that created the universe and continues to rule it. Judaism originated in Israel and the founder was Abraham. Abraham formed a covenant with God around 1812 BC. Like Christianity and Islam, Jews believe that there is only one God. Another important figure is Moses. Moses is important because he gave the Jews the Torah, which is the Jewish holy book that contains the teachings/laws of God. Jews worship in Synagogues and have spiritual leaders called Rabbis. Jews believe in the inherent goodness of the world and its inhabitants as creations of God and do not require a savior to save them from original sin. They also have a covenant, or agreement, between God and the Jewish people. They believe that obedience and goodness will be rewarded and sin is punished. Some of the celebrations throughout the year include Hanukah, Passover, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. |
| ***Station 2 (15 points)***   * Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others. * Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion. * Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way. | ***Highlight at least 2 key points from the reading that addresses each of these competencies***  **Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.**  1.)Talking about religion can touch the depth of someone's identity, causing some discussions to feel like an attack, especially when based on misinformation and stereotypes. Therefore, it is imperative to foster a climate of tolerance, respect, and honesty.  2.) The schools approach to religion ins academic, not devotional.  **Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.**  1.)There are four approaches to teaching religion: historical, literary, traditions-based, and cultural.  2.)Teachers are expected to teach about religion in a variety of ways in their classroom.  **Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.**  1.Having students explore their assumptions is an essential first step in helping them look at religion clearly.  2.Not everyone in the class is expected to agree. But students should understand that the goal is developing awareness and understanding. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  1. Before I try to lead students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices I will make sure my expectations are clear about how students should act during the discussion. I will talk to the students about how not everyone has the same religion and how we need to respect all our classmates thoughts and ideas.  2. I will explain to students that just because they learn or talk about a religion other than their own it does not mean that they believe in it or are going against their own religion.  1. I will use the four approaches of teaching religion in my classroom in order to address the standards that need to be met in sixth grade. I will use the approach that works the best for my students.  2. I will teach students about religion through a variety of ways in my classroom including discussion, group projects, research projects, cooperative learning, and independent assessment.  1. I will have my students explore their assumptions about religions other than their own so they know that it is ok to have assumptions and so they can then decide if their assumption is correct or not.  2. I will make sure students are aware that they do not have to agree with everything that is discussed or learned about. I will make sure they know that they just need to be aware of different religious beliefs. |
| ***Station 3 (15 points)***   * Understand the difference between the secular academic and devotional approaches to religion, and consistently use the secular academic approach. * Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom. * Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom. * Create an environment of respect and tolerance—a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about religion. | ***The AAR guidelines outlines 4 Approaches to teaching religion (see pages 10-11). Which approach do you think you will follow? Why?***  I could see myself using the historical approach in my classroom where religion occurs within courses or lessons focused on history. I think this approach would be the best way to teach about religion at the 6th grade level because it is clear and straight to the point. This approach talks about the origins of a religion and its development which are presented in historical context with the political and cultural influences represented as central to understanding how that religion emerged, gained followers, and spread.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  **Understand the difference between the secular academic and devotional approaches to religion, and consistently use the secular academic approach.**  I would carefully plan my lesson ahead of time and make sure I consistently use the secular academic approach. I would also have another teacher review my lesson.  **Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom.**  I would address that not everyone in the classroom had the same religious beliefs and discuss that some people get very upset if their religion is talked negatively about or looked down upon. I would explain that any negative comments would result in consequences.  **Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom.**  I would be aware that not all the students in my classroom had the same religious beliefs. I would come up with a plan ahead of time to manage the various backgrounds through the use of student-centered approaches that would allow students to become more educated about the religions of the world.  **Create an environment of respect and tolerance—a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about religion.**  I think this is so important in order to make your students feel comfortable about discussing religion.  This would be the first thing I would discuss before I started my religion unit. I could see myself spending a whole class period on the importance of respect and tolerance for each other's religious beliefs. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  I would stick to teaching about the origins of a religion and its development. I think this would help me make sure I stayed with the secular academic approach.  I would also make clear learning goals, discuss expectations and explain that not everyone in the classroom has the same religious beliefs and how important it is to respect each others beliefs. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development and pedagogy?***  The AAR document pointed out really important topics that need to be addressed before learning can occur. In the AAR document I learned that there are multiple things that need to be addressed before a unit on religion can take place. I realized that the teacher needs to be educated and unbiased towards religions that they do not practice. Also the teacher has to create a safe and comfortable learning environment as well as explain to the students that not everybody has the same beliefs. | ***How will you take all of the information you have gained from AAR and your research and make it comprehensible to your 6th graders? This is your “snapshot of practice” - provide at least 1 specific example of practice.***  I would have students work together to research the different religions. I would then have the students pick two of the religions and have them compare and contrast them using a Venn diagram. Finally I would have the students discuss how the religions have changed over time and what causes the changes in the religions. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |