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Religion Scavenger Hunt

***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***  See pages below chart for annotated bibliography. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion.***  **Buddhism**  Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists seek to reach a state of nirvana, following the path of Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), who went on a quest for Enlightenment. There is no belief is a personal god, instead Buddhist believe that nothing is fixed or permanent and that change is always possible. Buddhist believe that life is both endless and subject to impermanence, suffering, and uncertainty. Buddhist believe existence is endless because individual are reincarnated over and over again, experiencing suffering throughout many lives. There are four Noble Truths, which are the essence to Buddha’s teachings: The trust of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering. Another fact of the Buddhist is that they can either worship at home or at a temple. The path to Enlightenment is through practice and development of morality, meditation, and wisdom.  **Hinduism**  The main basic teaching of Hinduism is that a human’s basic nature is not confirmed to the body or the mind. Inside each of us is the spirit or spark of God within the soul. All things are ever united with God. One aspect of Hinduism is yoga. There are four types of yoga that can be done: Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Raja Yoga. The sacred texts of Hindu are The Vedas, they are a collection of hymns, prayers and magic spells. The Upanishads are stories and parable told by gurus to their students. The Mahanharata is a story of way between two royal families and The Ramayana is a story of the god Rama and the rescue of his wife from the evil demon king. The name for God in Hinduism is Brahman and the divine essence within us is Atman.  **Islam**  Islam means “surrender” or “submission.” This religion was founded on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims believe in Allah, the creator and sustainer of the world. The Quran is the sacred text of Islam and it contains the teachings from Muhammad who received them from Allah. Muslims believe that Allah is the only true God and there is no equal. There are 5 Pillars that each Muslim must follow. The first Pillar is Shahadah, which is a ritual profession of faith, where you tell the community that you believe that they only thing or God that you worship is Allah. The second Pillar is Salah, which is daily prayer. Muslims are required to pray to Allah five times a day (Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha). The third Pillar of Islam is Zakah, which is charity. This is the opportunity of people of the Islamic religion to help each other out if needed. The fourth Pillar is Sawm, also known as fasting. There are times throughout the year that Muslims must fast, the most important being during Ramadan. The last Pillar is Hajj, which is a pilgrimage. All Muslims must make a pilgrimage once in their life (as long as they can afford to) to Mekkah, where they follow the paths of the previous prophets.  **Christianity**  Christianity developed based on the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are three major branches of Christianity: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. The Christian beliefs include there is only one true God who is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the belief that Jesus is the divine and human Messiah sent to save the world. Christians believe that Jesus was fully human, but he was born as the son of God. Jesus was sent to Earth to protect humanity from their sins. He was crucified but rose again three days later.  **Judaism**  There are many important things to the Jewish but the three “main” ideas/things that they believe are that there is only one God and we are made in his image. They also follow the same 10 Commandments that Christians follow. The main book of Judaism is the Torah. The Torah holds the important teachings of the Jewish religion. Another important part of the Jewish religion is the “Promised Land.” They believe that God made a covenant to Abraham that Israel with be the land of the Jews forever. This land holds importance to the religion, even if all of the Jews do not live there. |
| ***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.*   * One way to start of class when discussion religion is to first have the students think about their own beliefs and different words that are affiliated with religion. One way to do this is to have them reflect in writing about some key words or concepts like religion, belief, or any tradition/religion. Having students brainstorm their ideas can help student’s identity their most basic associations (pg 11-12). * Another way to do this is to foster a climate of tolerance, respect, and honesty. There are many different ways to do this is the classroom. An example of this is to have student examine how their judgments many impact others. (pg 12).   *Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion*.   * When teaching about religion in schools, you need to make students aware of why they are learning this information. Students need to realize two things before you being to teaching about religion: “help them realize that learning about religion is a legal and appropriate undertaking for public schools; and help them realize that the aim of teaching about religion in to better understand the religious dimensions of human experience, not to promote religion or a particular religious perspective (pg 11).” * .Another example of a best practice would involve looking at people who practice the same religion but live in different countries. Students may not realize that “Muslims in Indonesia will practice their faith differently than Muslims in Nigeria (pg 12). One strategy to use is to begin with an example of the diversities represented in a tradition that students are familiar with, such as Christianity, and then help them apply that understanding to other less familiar traditions and worldviews (pg 13).   *Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.*   * Teachers should never try to coerce students to accept or reject any particular religious tradition, belief, or practice as well as non-belief or atheism. * Explain to students that not everyone is expected to agree but students should understand that the goal is to develop awareness and understanding and accurate representations of traditions reduce the misunderstandings arising from false generalizations, bigotry, or valorization of a particular religious or non-religious worldview (pg 12). | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  *Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.*  Under this competency, I would incorporate the idea of having a “safe” classroom for students. I want my classroom to be a place where students feel comfortable to voice their opinions or discuss things freely, without the fear of being judged. I would do this by setting ground rules for the classroom and explain to students that people can voice their opinions and others cannot judge what they say. Also, the only way someone can voice their opinion is if it is not going to be offensive to others. In order to show the students the way to voice their opinions, I would model for the student’s ways to say their comments. If they see how to say something and how not to say something, then they will know what is expected of them.  *Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.*  Under this competency, I would choose to make the students aware of why I am teaching them the information. Some students may question why they need to learn about different religions if they do not believe or follow that religion. I would explain that I am not teaching or preaching to them about the religious practices, but helping them understand the different people and cultures around the world. Students need to learn acceptance for other people and their religions in order to live in our world today. This is one way for them to learn acceptance and better understand people around the world.  *Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.*  Under this competency, I would choose to make sure students know that they do not have to agree with everything that is said but should be accepting of what others say and accept what is being taught in class. Students need to understand that the purpose of learning about religion is to gain an understanding of different religions and accepting others differences. I will explain to students that I am teaching them this information in order to gain a true understanding of different religions and not to believe everything they hear from outside sources. |
| ***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 feel like I would use the literary approach when teaching about religion. Since this approach ties into language arts, which is one of my concentrations, I feel it would be a great opportunity to plan cross curricular activities. I like the fact that students read different texts and reflect on what they read. They get to analyze the texts and how they influence culture and the lives of the people. Reading actual texts and stories is also another way to help students get rid of the stereotypes they may have in place about a certain religion.  ***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.*  Devotional and secular approaches are very different approaches to teaching about religion. The devotional approach is where you are “preaching” about the religion and promoting that religion to the students. The secular approach is where you are teaching about a religion to make the students aware of the different practices or beliefs they have but you are not promoting or trying to force these beliefs onto the students.  *Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom.*  One way I would try to prevent disagreements would be to develop a classroom that is tolerate and respectful from the beginning. I would let students know that nothing that is disrespectful or inappropriate will be talked about or said during class. If this doesn’t work in all cases, I would tell students that they can share their story or statement but it must be in a respectful way. After they share, the class can discuss their disagreement but in a way that is respectful to the other person’s opinion.  *Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom.*  In many cases, there are different students with different religions within a classroom. One way to recognize these different religions would be not to just focus on different holidays depending on the diversity of the students. Many teachers focus a lot on Christmas during the holidays but some students may be Jewish or Muslim, so they do not believe in Christmas. Allowing these students to work on projects related to their beliefs is one way to acknowledge different religions.  *Create an environment of respect and tolerance—a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about religion.*  In my classroom, I would set up a room of respect from the very beginning. I would tell students that they need to be respectful of other people and their beliefs and not to make judgments based on that. Students would be allowed to present their opinions or stories but it would have to be in a respect way. They would not be allowed to say anything negative about another person or religion and they have to learn different ways to word their statements without being offensive or negative. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  Under this station, I feel some of the important things include using the secular approach and create a classroom that is a safe environment for students. Being secular in the classroom when teaching and talking about religion is extremely important. As a teacher, you do not want it to seem like you are preaching to students about a certain religion but instead offer information about the different religions and their beliefs. In you are being to devotional that can cause problem in the classroom, and also with parents and school officials. As a teacher, I would need to explain different practices to students and different beliefs but make sure that they know they do not have to believe them or begin to follow them. I will explain to students that I am simply presenting them with information to help them better understand different people and religions around the world. I feel it is also extremely important to make a safe classroom for students. This is another important part when talking about religion in the classroom. Students need to feel safe with expressing their opinions or telling about their experiences. This will be done right from the beginning so students feel comfortable talking or expressing themselves during class. Like I stated before, I would model the correct way to say things compared to the incorrect, offensive way. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development and pedagogy?***  After this reading information, there are many things that I learned that I will take with me when teaching my future students. I learned that it is very important to make sure you are not ‘preaching’ to the students in your class. As a teacher, you need to be fair and strictly teach them about the religion and practices, not trying to convince students to believe them. It is also extremely important to make sure your classroom is a safe place for students to share their thoughts and ideas. Religion can be a tough subject to talk about, so guidelines need to be in place from the very beginning. Students also need to know that it is okay if they do not agree with the teachings or beliefs of a certain religion but they are learning this information to help them understand and gain an appreciation for other cultures. | ***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.***  Since language arts is one of my concentrations, I feel like I could easily incorporate religion into my language arts class. One thing that I would like to do in my future classroom would be for students to read different texts from different religions. They could read the different stories that are presented in the readings and analyze the texts to figure out the meanings. There are many different literary terms that could be examined during the readings. I feel like this would give students to chance to understand different religions and why they believe the things that they do. A certain story may be tied to one of the central beliefs of a religion, so reading that story will help explain it. I feel it would be a great opportunity for students to read texts they may not have read before or are not familiar with, to help them gain and understanding and appreciation for other people, cultures, and religions. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |

**Annotated Bibliography**

**OACS**

**Geography Strand- Human Systems: Statement 8:** Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).

**Resources**

* Starr, F. (2011). *What Do You Believe? Religion and Faith in the World Today*. New York: Dorling Kindersley Limited.

**Annotation:** This book focuses on many different religions around the world. Each religion that needs to be covered by that standard is in the book, so it is a great resource for teachers to use. I would use this literature book when talking about religions in my class because it does have sections about each religion. Depending on what religion I was talking about on that day, I could pull the information from this text or even read the text to the student as an opening to the class. I liked this resource because it has each of the religions in it (I’m using this for my adolescent literature component for each one, but I am still gathering 3 resources for each religion).

**Buddhism**

* *Buddhism.* Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/

**Annotation:** This website would be a great source to use when teaching about Buddhism. There are several different tabs on this site, including ‘Buddhism at a glance, beliefs, and history.’ Under each tab, important information about the religion is presented. There are also additional sections under each tab that gives you important information about holidays and other important aspects about Buddhism. This is a great source to collect basic information about the religion.

* *The Story of Buddha.* Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_3gK4VO9roE

**Annotation:** This YouTube video is a short explanation about Buddhism. The video is short and very kid friendly. Many of the important aspects of the religion are presented in a way that students will understand which is very helpful when talking about the topic of religion. This would be a great way to open the lesson about Buddhism or even use as a reviewing activity at the end.

* *Buddha for Kids.* Retrieved fromhttp://ancienthistory.mrdonn.org/Buddhism.html

**Annotation:** This is also another great kid friendly site. This site offers some of the basic information about Buddhism, but also includes additional links to visit. The site starts off talking about the history of Buddhism, and then goes into some of the important parts of the religion. The site is written in a way that students can easily understand and there also isn’t too much information to make it overwhelming.

**Hinduism**

* *Hinduism: Background, Basic Beliefs and Sacred Texts.* Retrieved from http://www.uri.org/kids/world\_hind\_basi.htm

**Annotation:** This site is a great resource to use when researching and trying to learn about Hinduism. This site offers basic information about the religion, including the history. There are many different questions that they site offers and includes the answers to these basic questions. The information is presented in a way that is each to read and answers many of the basic and important questions someone may have about the religion.

* Carr, K. Retrieved from http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/religion/hinduism.htm

**Annotation:** This is a website that is specifically for children. The site offers information about Hinduism and also includes a video that students can watch.This site offers some of the history about the religion and how the religion came to be. There is a lot of history and the site plus the video that offer additional information. This is a great site to use when learning about the basic history of Hinduism.

* Jani, M., & Jani, V. (2005). *What You Will See Inside a Hindu Temple*. Skylight Paths Publishing.

**Annotation:** This is a great source to have within a classroom when talking about Hinduism. This book has pictures for students to look at and tons of information about what is inside Hindu temple. There is also information about different aspects about the religion, like scriptures and festivals. It is a great resource to use during a lesson or to just have as an additional resource in the classroom for students to look at.

**Islam**

* *5 Pillars of Islam.* Retrieved from http://www.fanar.gov.qa/(S(tsdindjo0iejihfwshaz1hvv))/KidsCorner/Pillars.aspx

**Annotation:** This site is focused on the 5 Pillars of Islam, which are the five duties you have to follow when you become a Muslim. On the site, each of the Pillars is explain. This is another site that is kid friendly and is written in a way for students to understand. This is a great resource to use when researching and trying to learn about the 5 Pillars of Islam.

* *History of Islam.* Retrieved from http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/hi/History\_of\_Islam

**Annotation:** This resource talking specifically about the History of Islam. The site starts at the very beginning, when Islam first began. The site talks about the meaning is the word “Islam” and about the different prophets of the Islam religion. This is a great resource to use when you want to learn about the history of Islam and how the religion began.

* *Religion Library: Islam.* Retrieved from http://www.patheos.com/Library/Islam.html

**Annotation:** This is a very brief website that offers “quick facts” about Islamic religion. There are some basic facts at the top of the page and there is a brief paragraph that talks about the beginning of the religion and talks about the current places around the world where people practice Islam. This is a great resource to use when you want quick and brief information about the religion.

**Christianity**

* *Religion Code: Christianity for Kids.* Retrieved from http://www.custom-qr-codes.net/christianity-kids.html

**Annotation:** This resource has some basic questions about Christianity. The site starts off with the questions and gives answers that are written in ways students can understand. These questions are basic questions that any student may have about the religion and the answers are brief but answer the question fully. At the bottom of the page there are additional links that can be visited with extra information.

* *Christianity.* Retrieved from http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ch/Christianity

**Annotation:** This is another kid friendly site that can be used to teaching students about Christianity. The site offers basic information about the religion, start from when it started and how it began. This is a very brief site about the religion but it does offer some of the central beliefs of the religion. This is a great source to use when you are looking for brief and basic information.

* *Religion Library: Christianity.* Retrieved from http://www.patheos.com/Library/Christianity.html

**Annotation:** This resource offers some quick and basic facts about the religion and also some of the history of the religion. The basic beliefs of the Christian religion are also on this site. This is a quick reference to use when looking at and trying to gain a basic understanding of Christianity.

**Judaism**

* *Judaism*. Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/HuongLam/presentation1-5329963

**Annotation:** This is a short ‘PowerPoint’ like presentation about the Jewish religion. There are many basic facts and customs related to the religion on this site. This is a great resource to use when you are looking for some of the basic and important parts of the Jewish religion. It could be used as a teacher resource or even something to look at during class with students.

* *Judaism for Kids*. Retrieved from http://www.thekidswindow.co.uk/Homework\_Help/Judaism.htm

**Annotation:** This site breaks down some of the important parts of the Jewish religion. The site starts off by explain some of the important parts of the Jewish religion, like how the Jewish only believe in one God. There are also a lot of other facts and information about the religion on this site. It is also written in a way for students to understand and try to relate to their own lives.

* *What is Judiam?.* Retrieved from http://www.bje.org.au/learning/judaism/kids/WhatIs.html

**Annotation:** This site breaks about the three main ideas of the Jewish religion. There are explanations about God, the Torah and Israel and the importance these things have on the Jewish religion. This is a great resource to use when looking at the basics of the Jewish religion and learning about the main things that they follow. It is also written in a way that is easy for students to read and understand.