***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 ONLS (specifically focusing on 6th grade social studies content), 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. Complete the Scavenger Hunt first (simply type responses in the boxes, or use other preferred format but you must address all components) and then you will participate in a Group Discussion (GD).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Pedagogical Competencies*** | ***Explore/Research/Reflect*** | ***Application*** |
| ***Station 1 (20 points)***   * Identify the ONLS 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 ONLS. Then develop an annotated bibliography: Identify 3 Resources for each of the world religions(incl. young adolescent literature): Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism***  Content 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).  **Buddhism**  Ancient India: The Impact of Buddhism as a World Religion.  National Geographic 2005 Retrieved July 25, 2014, from Learn360: http://www.learn360.com/ShowVideo.aspx?SearchText=buddhism&lid=18035759&GradeLevel=3360055&ID=128215  This video is about Buddhism and how is it practiced. It is one of the oldest religions and is based on the journey of Siddhartha Gautama. He is known as Buddha. The video focuses on how it was born in Ancient India and is known as a world religion. A teacher could use this in their classroom as a introduction for students. It provides a quick glimpse of the religion and can spark curiosity. Following the video, students can research more about the religion.  British Broadcasting Corporation. (2014, January 1). *BBC News*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism  This website is a great resource for students. It is a website that contains information about Buddhism. Each section contains a large amount of information available to do further research. Students can use this website to synthesize information about the religion. They can use the information present to finish an assignment or project.  United Religion Initiative. (2002, January 1). URI Kids : World Religions. *URI Kids: World Religions*. Retrieved July 25, 2014, from http://www.uri.org/kids/world\_budd.htm  This website contains a lot of information about Buddhism. It is interactive for students to explore. The website provides basic information about Buddhism and the practice of that religion. The teacher website to create a webquest for students to explore the website and learn valuable information.  **Christianity**  Christianity. Knowledge Unlimited, 1992 Retrieved July 25, 2014, from Learn360: http://www.learn360.com  /ShowVideo.aspx?SearchText=christianity&lid=18035759&GradeLevel=3360055&Subject=9331597&ID=1098647  This video provides information regarding Christianity. It is a short video and does not provide a complete overview of the entire religion. A teacher could simply use this video as a means of introduction to spark students’ curiosity.  Patheos Library. (2008, January 1). *Christianity Origins, Christianity History, Christianity Beliefs*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www.patheos.com/Library/Christianity.html  This website is a great resource, not only for Christianity, but also for other religions. A large amount of information can be found about the beginning of Christianity and how it is practiced across the world. A teacher can use this website to allow their students to explore it and have a basic information about Christianity.  Pollard, M. (1991). *Beliefs And Believers*. New York: Scholastic.  This is a great resource for students. It is written for a sixth grader in mind. The book covers not only, Christianity, but other as well. Students could use this book to find information about multiple religions. It is a fantastic resource for any teacher or student.  **Hinduism**  Murali, A. (2012). *Growing Up Hindu*. Kappaa, HI: Himalayan Academy.  This book is written and produced by people who practice Hinduism. The book is a guide for those who are curious about Hindu practices. A teacher could use this as a resource in the classroom for a project or research.  Ridley, S. (1997, January 1). Puja. Smithsonian Institution Washington, D.C.. Retrieved July 25, 2014, from https://www.asia.si.edu/pujaonline/puja/start.htm  This interactive website provides a lot of history about the Hindu religion. Students can go through the website to discover information. Teachers can also use this to introduce the religion or create a webquest. There is a teacher guide provided for teachers.  Sharma, S. (2014). *Hinduism For Kids: Beliefs And Practices*. New York: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.  This is a simple book that allows students to explore Hinduism. The author has written book specifically for young kids. She presumes that the reader has no knowledge about Hinduism. This would be great for the classroom because it starts the reading knowing that the student has no prior knowledge of Hinduism.  **Islam**  Aslan, R. (2014). *No god but God: The Origins and Evolution of Islam*. New York: Ember.  This book provides the history of Islam as well as its place in society today. The author discusses the way in which Islam as changed since the beginning and it will always be evolving. A teacher could use this book to allow students to explore the ways in which religion connects to today’s society. It is important that students understand this in the life.  Inside Islam - The History Channel. (2013, July 25). *YouTube*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mdp3v9feoSA  This video contains information about Islam. It is a History Channel video that talks about the practices of Islam. The video also points out the current worldviews about Islam. It takes into consideration important historical events. A teacher could use this video to wrap up a unit about Islam. Since the video is long, the teacher may only wish to show a portion of the video to the students.  Muslims Teacher Guide. (1995, January 1). *PBS*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/muslims/index.html  This resource is great for teachers to use. It is full of facts about the Islamic practices and way of life. A teacher could use this to help guide students in an activity. Teachers could also use this to help guide a discussion between students about Islam.  **Judaism**  Boyne, J. (2007). *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. Oxford: David Fickling Books.  This book is about a German boy who meets a Jewish boy who is living in a concentration camp. The two learn a lot about each other and their background. A teacher could use this book to introduce the idea of how many people are taught idea about a group of people that is wrong. The idea of tolerance could be introduced through this book. Also, students could learn about the Jewish customs and practices that others thought were wrong.  British Broadcasting Corporation. Judaism. (2014, January 1). *BBC News*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions  /judaism/beliefs/beliefs\_1.shtml  As a great resource for students, this website provides many answers about Judaism. Each section contains a large amount of information available to do further research. Students can use the information to understand more about Judaism.  Religion: Judaism. (2014, January 1). *Judaism*. Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism.html  This source is written from the point of view of people who practice Judaism. The website allows a viewer to explore various aspects of Judaism. Specifically, it is resourceful when searching for information about Judaism practices. A teacher could use this website to show how students need to understand a religion from the point of view of those who practice it. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **Buddhism**  Buddhism focuses on spiritual development and understanding of life. Followers learn about Siddhartha Gautama, Buddha, who went on a journey for enlightenment. There is no god, but followers follow the practices that Buddha did. They do this through meditation and the development of morality. The people always believe things can change in anyway. They worship at home or in a temple.  **Christianity**  Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah of the world based off of the Bible. It is also believed that he is the Son of God and that he was sent to save people from sin. Christians believe that there is only one God and that the one God is made up of three parts: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Their holy book is the Bible and believe that Christmas and Easter are Holy days.  **Hinduism**  Hinduism is the major religion in India and Nepal. The practices stretch back thousands of years. There is no founder or scripture. Hinduism is considered a way of life or a family of religions, instead of just one. Hindus believe in a Supreme God. They have cycles of birth, death, and rebirth, which is governed by Karma. Their main texts are the Vedas.    **Islam**  People who practice Islam are called Muslims. They believe that Islam first occurred in Mecca, Arabia. They believe that there is only one god, Allah. There are many prophets of Islam and some are Jesus, Moses, and Abraham. The final prophet was Muhammad. Their holy book is the Qur’an and Sunnah. There are five pillars of faith. They are the declaration of faith, praying five times a day, giving money to charity, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca.  **Judaism**  Moses founded Judaism. They believe that there is only one God, who they have a covenant. Their religious document is the Torah. Their law is typically oral. Jews can trace their history back through Abraham. Jews do not believe in Jesus and believe that the Messiah has yet to come. |
| ***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***  The reading mentions that a teacher must be able to have students, “move away from making generalizations toward more qualified statements—from, for example, ‘All Christians are intolerant’ to ‘I have heard that Christians are intolerant—is this true?’ Or to ‘Some Christians are intolerant’”. Generalizations need to be broken down in the classroom. Without generalizations, the teacher and students are able to break down stereotypes about a specific religion. Also, breaking down generalizations allows for a proper conversation and discussion of many world religions together. Students would be able to explore all of hem without worrying about others think about them.  The reading also mentions that, “the goal is developing awareness and understanding.” Studying the many world religions allows for students to become aware of the world and society around them. Students can build tolerance by studying and actually understanding the different practices. I believe that students can a sense of how many people have differences, but we all live together and work as one. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  To be able to incorporate these practices into my classroom, I would attempt to get to know what religion each student practices before having a discussion. I would create a survey that students could complete. They could even complete it anonymously if they wish. Taking a survey will allow students to express their beliefs, but do it in a safe forum. After the survey, I would begin having a conversation with the students.  In order to make myself aware about teaching religions, I would continuously partake in professional development opportunities. Being able to stay current on events that are tied to religion will help when it comes to teaching. Staying current also is important because students will learn the most current information.  A way to present information in a fair way comes from knowing each religion. I would create lessons that all students are able to explore each religion. Making sure each student has this opportunity is important because it gives them a chance to see the differences in the practices. |
| ***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?***  The approach I see myself following the most would be the Literary Approach. Since I teach both Language Arts and Social Studies, I would be able to make a better connection between religion and text. Also, I believe being about to cross-connect curriculum is a good thing to have in the classroom. The Literacy Approach can be taught well as long as the teacher is trained in the literary and world religion areas. I feel that the Literary Approach can be the most effective method for students to make a connection with their subjects.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  I understand that there is a fine line between teaching religion with a secular academic purpose and a devotional purpose. A teacher must be prepared to teach solely the academic way. A devotional purpose cannot be present in any teaching. A teacher does this by making sure that they set up a framework for students to understand. If there is any confusion between the sides, the teacher can refer back to the framework for students. With the academic approach a teacher is ensuring that students will be able to understand and learn about all religions in a way that supports their understanding of history or the world around them.  A teacher must also be prepared when discussions or issues arrive in the classroom. The teacher needs to know how to facilitate healthy, appropriate discussions and activities. It is the teacher’s job to vary the teachings and understand of the different religions required in the standard. If it is maintained well, then the teacher is able to effectively know that they are making their students well informed about the many world religions. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  One specific example is that I would have students read a book together as a class. After the reading, I would hold a discussion about it. At this point, the students would already have prior knowledge about the different world religions. I would facilitate a discussion that allows students to make a connection between the reading and a world religion.  Another way I would have students use the Literary Approach would be to have students work in small groups. I would run it similar to a literature circle. Students would take turns reading and making connections. Students would be given guidelines to know what is expected of them.  The final way I could have students utilize the Literary Approach is to complete a book talk. Students would read a book and create a review of other students. The sole focus of the book talk would be to search of world religion. Students would need to make connections while reading and then present it to the class. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development, pedagogy and thinking about teaching social studies?***  Throughout the reading of the document, I found it interesting the different ways in which religion is taught in schools.  I knew that there were different methods in which religion could be taught, but I appreciated the in depth look at how teachers can use the different approaches.  I also found it interesting that it helps students if the teacher sets up a framework of each religion in the beginning.  This way when students question why what they are learning is different from what they believe, the teacher can refer back to the framework.  Then the teacher can explain that each student has their own devotional approach and what the teacher is teaching is religious studies.  In the future teaching of religious studies, I hope that I will be able to use this practice.  It is important that students know that studying religion helps us as historians learn about a group of people or region. | ***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.***  In my sixth grade class, I would provide all students the opportunity to research and develop knowledge about the specific religions around the world.  Through the research students will understand how religion has had a large impact on society around them today and in the past.  Students can also compare and contrast the different religions.  This allows for students to better determine how life in that religion was lived.  Snapshot:  After having students do their research, students will pick a specific group of people who practice a religion.  The students will create a presentation about how religion effects daily life and practices.  After students present, they will gather in small groups for discussion.  The discussion will center around how geography, life style, government, and economy, are changed and effected because of their religion.  Also, students will have a chance to compare and contrast the different groups of people who may practice the same religion and observe how if may differ. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |