***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).

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| ***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***  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  White, Brian. *A Five Minute Introduction.* (1993). BuddaNet Basic Buddhism Guide. Retrieved From: <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm>  This source is an introduction to Buddhism. Included in this article are common questions and answers asked about Buddhism. You can find information about Buddhism, Budda, how to become a Buddhist, and the basic facts of the religion. This is a great introduction to the religion.  *Buddhist Stories for Kids.* (2005-2014). D-Kidz. Retrieved From: <http://www.d-kidz.com/buddhist-stories-for-kids/>  This website has a plethora of information to help students understand the concepts of Buddhism. There are books, stories, music, poems, cds, and other sources that can be viewed or purchased to help students learn about the Buddhism religion.  *Religion: Buddhism.* (n.d.) Retrieved from: <http://www.wartgames.com/themes/religions/buddhism.html>  This is a great website for students to become engaged in the Buddhist Religion. Included in this website are games, trivia, and stories about the Buddhism Religion to help students understand the key facts about Buddhism. This website also includes powerpoints for teachers to use to aide in teaching the subject to students.  Christianity  *Christianity: Background, Basics, Beliefs and Sacred Texts.* (2002). United Religions Initiative. Retrieved From: http://www.uri.org/kids/world\_chri\_basi.htm  This website gives an overview of Christianity in a way students can understand. There are answers to questions and also easy to read lists about the beliefs of Christians. This would be a good website for students to explore to gain a basic understanding of Christianity.  *Christianity.* (n.d.). Social Studies for Kids. Retrieved from: <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/christianity.htm>  This website provides links to other great sites about Christianity. The links provided give overviews, important details and in depth information about Christianity. It would be a great site to direct students to so they can obtain more information about Christianity.  *The Six Main Religions: Christianity.* (n.d.) Woodlands Junior High School. Retrieved from: <http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/christian.htm>  This website contains all of the information needed to introduce Christianity to students. Included in this website is an overview, important facts, what Christians believe and celebrate, the Ten Commandments and links to other websites for more information on Christianity. This website would be great for teachers to use to introduce Christianity to students.  Hinduism  *Hindu Kids.* (2009-2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.hindukids.org/>  This is a great website for students to learn about Hinduism. Included in this website are facts, stories and games all related to learning about Hinduism. There are also book recommendations for students to read to gain more information on the subject.  *Hinduism.* (n.d.) Woodland Junior High School. Retrieved from: <http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/hinduism.htm>  This website contains the basic facts, beliefs and ways of Hinduism. It also talks about the gods and places of worship. Book recommendations are also given to give more information on the Hindu religion.  *Introducing Hinduism to Non Hindu Kids.* (2012). Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLa996MzgjE>  This video is a great introductory video to Hinduism. It includes an overview of the Hindu religion in an engaging video students will enjoy. This would be a great video to use as a lesson opener.  Islam  *Religion Library: Islam.* (2008-2014). Patheos Library. Retrieved from: <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Islam.html>  This website gives a great overview of the Islam Religion. All of the important facts are listed in an easy to read manner. This is a great website to find the basics of the Islam religion.  *Islam.* (2012-2014). History for Kids. Retrieved From: <http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/islam/religion/>  This website provides an easy to read over view of the Islam religion and also has a video of a Muslim prayer. This is a great website to have students explore when wanting to gain more information on the Islam religion.  Khan, Rukhsana. *Muslim Child: Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems.* (2002) Albert Whitman Company.  This book is geared towards children to better help them understand the Islam Religion. Included in the book are stories, poems, and prayers about Islam. It explains some of the rituals and teachings of Islam.  Judaism  Rich, Tracey. *Welcome to Judaism.* (1995-2012). Judaism 101. Retrieved from: <http://www.jewfaq.org/index.shtml>  This website contains everything you want to know about Judaism. There are many sections that give basic information or more in depth information. There are also sections directed towards beginning, intermediate and advanced readers. This would be great for students to explore and find easy to read information.  *Judaism Pages for Kids.* (2012). NSW Board of Jewish Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.bje.org.au/learning/judaism/kids/>  This website is a great resource for students. The site is easily navigated and provides a table of contents for links to an overview, holidays, the Torah and other factors of Judaism. It is geared towards children and easy for them to navigate.  *Why I like Being Jewish.* (2014). Jewish Kids. Retrieved from: <http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/1347962/jewish/Why-I-Like-Being-Jewish.htm>  This is a great video where kids talk about why they like being Jewish. They name some of the different beliefs and traditions that are part of the Jewish religion. There are also links to other videos kids would enjoy watching to gain information about the Jewish religion. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  Buddhism  Buddhism is a Religion that originated about 2,500 years ago by a man named Siddhartha Gotama. Gotama is known as the Budda. Buddhism teachings lie mainly around the Four Noble Truths:  1. Suffering Exists  2. Suffering arises from attachment to desires.  3. Suffering ceases when attachment to desire ceases  4. Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Noble Eight fold path.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Three Qualities** | **Eightfold Path** | | Wisdom *(panna)* | Right View | |  | Right Thought | | Morality *(sila)* | Right Speech | |  | Right Action | |  | Right Livelihood | | Meditation *(samadhi)* | Right Effort | |  | Right Mindfulness | |  | Right Contemplation |   Christianity  Christianity is the largest religion worldwide. It is based on the beliefs of Jesus Christ. There are many different denominations of Christianity, all of which believe in the triune God. They worship in a church and the Bible is the book they follow.  Hinduism  Hinduism is the world’s oldest religion. They believe in a universal soul called Branham and also in reincarnation. The goal is to achieve Moksha, which is becoming united with Brahma. This is done by achieving one or all of the four paths. The paths are:   1. Knowledge 2. Meditation 3. Devotion 4. Good Works   Islam  The Islam religion is a religious tradition founded on the teachings of Muhammad. The Quarn is the sacred text of Islam. Islam practices the five pillars, which are: ritual profession of faith, ritual of prayer, zakat, fasting and hajj. All aspects of the Islam religion revolve around serving the Allah, which they believe is the one true God.  Judaism  Judaism follows three main ideas: God, Torah and Israel. They believe there is one God that created all people, the Torah is a book that contains their stories and laws, and the land of Israel is Important to the Jewish people because they believe all people will return to the land of Israel. |
| ***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***  Encourage Students to not make generalizations about certain religions, instead have them ask questions and generate informed answers. Examples include: Instead of saying, “I have heard, say is it true?” This will allow for an open discussion where students of a certain religion do not feel attacked about their beliefs or traditions. It will also allow students to provide information to other students about their own religion.  Ensure students know the purpose of the discussion is for understanding. Not all students are going to agree and that is acceptable. Students need to know we all have different beliefs.  The teacher will take an academic approach, not a devotional one. It is important for the teacher to teach religion just like any other topic, with the focus being to inform students and help them gain understanding.  The teacher will teach about the study of religion but not practice any religion. When teaching world religion, it is important to give students the information they need to become knowledgeable on other religions and beliefs without actually practicing the religion.  Teach about religion from a non-devotional point of view. Students need to study the actual religion, inquire about the different traditions, beliefs and rituals. By presenting material in a non devotional way it will reduce the amount of controversies in the classroom.  Present the origins, relevance and traditions of all religions. By introducing students to all of the religions they are being shown the different aspects of each one and it cannot appear a certain one is being favored. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  I would begin the lesson by asking students if they practice a certain religion and if they would like to share with the class what it is. I would start by telling them the religion I practice and my beliefs. This will open up a discussion where students can share their information and gain knowledge from others.  To incorporate this into my world religions teaching, I would provide the students with factual information on all of the religions. All information will be unbiased and used to inform students of the different beliefs and studies. No Religion would be stressed more than another.  I would have students complete a chart of facts as we talk about the different religions. Included in the chart would be the origin, age of religion, Book or Teachings followed, who they worship and where they worship. This would give the students the facts on all the religions and allow them to have a reference where all of the facts are listed in one place. |
| ***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 would use the literary approach. I would use this approach because I think it would give the students to opportunity to inquire about specific religions on their own. By reading stories and poems about certain religions, it can spark their interest and lead them to investigate into more in depth information on the topic. This would be a great way to create a student centered lesson where the students find something that really interests them and continue to find more information on their own. I also think age appropriate stories and texts will help the students gain a better understanding of the religions. Reading a children’s literature book or story will be more beneficial in the student’s learning than gaining information from a textbook.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  By the competencies in station 3, I understand we must teach religion in a fair, unbiased way. It is important we teach the facts about the religion and not the practices. We must approach the subject like we would any other topic and not share our own personal opinion on the matter. Our goal is to inform students of the different religions, not encourage them to form an opinion on them. We also need to ensure students of different religions feel comfortable in the classroom talking about their own knowledge on religion. Students can learn from each other about the different religions, but for this to happen the classroom needs to be a judgment free place for students to openly discuss the traditions and rituals they are familiar with. I understand it is my job to keep all negativity regarding different religions out of the classroom. I also must show respect to the students regarding their beliefs and views. By modeling respect, the students will feel more comfortable discussing their views. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  I would begin with a brainstorming activity where as a class we brainstorm what we know about the different religions we are studying. Students will be able to state the facts they know and ask questions such as, “I have heard or I have seen.” This will also allow me to see what misconceptions the students have about religions. During this activity students will be able to share what they know about their own religion or other religion. Only facts will be allowed to be talked about during this activity.  I would also have a collection of children’s books about the different religions. Students can read these and see what interests them. These books will be stories about rituals and traditions of certain religions. This will allow them explore certain religions on their own. |
| ***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?***  The AAR Document has really opened my eyes in many ways. This has allowed me to see the approach we must take in order to teach religion in an open, unbiased way. It is important for the students to feel comfortable discussing such a controversial topic. This document had a positive impact in many different ways. It impacted my professional development by allowing me to see I must keep an open mind when discussing these topics. I also must present all religions to the students in the same manner and give the same information on each. It is also important I keep my personal beliefs to myself. Students are very impressionable, if they think the teacher or student will think differently of them because they practice a different religion, it will hinder the amount of information they share. When teaching about religion the document has made me aware I must present the facts. I need to teach the information as I would any other subject. The students need to be provided with the facts of the religion so they can gain an understanding of it. Part of social studies is studying the world and the different cultures. This document has made me realize it is important for myself and students to be familiar and understand the different cultures and religions. This will give the students the information they need to accept people of different religions and 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.***  I will give students access to the different religions through books, stories, presentations and online resources. Once they have explored and become familiar with the different religions I will have them complete a project about the religions. Students will be able to choose the religion they want to know more about and create a project that highlights the important aspects of the religion. The projects will be left for the students to decide and can include role playing, posters, charts , essays, etc. Included in this project will be the origin of the religion, beliefs, worship centers, gods, and other information the students find important. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |