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

***“Scavenger Hunt”***

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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. | 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).  *Annotated bibliography at bottom* | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***   * Buddhism: Buddha taught people to find truth for themselves. Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path, which covers mental discipline, wisdom, and ethical behavior. * Christianity: Christianity is the largest religion in the world. There are many denominations under Christianity. Christians believe there is one God and that 2,000 years ago he sent his son Jesus Christ to save us from sin. * Hinduism: Hinduism is the oldest religion. Hindus believe there is one ultimate being called Brahman. They also believe in reincarnation. * Islam: The Islam religion believes in one God. They believe that submitting to Allah will bring peace to people. Muhammad was thought to be the last messenger of God. He was meant to guide people down the right path. * Judaism: Jews believe there is only one God. They believe God is present in everyday life. The Torah is the law of God which is found in the first five books of the Hebrew bible. |
| ***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. | 1.-Students already have strongly held ideas about religion (p. 11)  -teachers need to foster tolerance, respect, and honesty. Teachers need to encourage students to not create any generalizations, to examine their judgments, to explore new ideas and to ask questions (p. 12)  2.-Students should write about key words and concepts, which will show their basic associations with those things. Teachers should then explain how bias/assumptions can block new learning (p.12)  -To help students understand all religions contain diversity to some degree, teachers should start with examples of one that students are more familiar with. Teachers should start with showing diversity among Christianity for example, to help students understand. (p. 13)  3.-The guidelines for teaching state it should be academic not devotional, should be about awareness not acceptance, should help students study not practice the religion, inform but not conform. (p. 7)  -The historical approach is the most common and typically easiest. It provides details of the origins of a religion and its development with political and cultural influences. (p. 9) | * Students will learn tolerance and acceptance of others. Students will read real stories of what it is like for children part of other religions. By reading about another person about their age it makes things more real to them and helps them to understand people are people, no matter what religion. Then students will be able to hold a class discussion and talk about what they know or think about certain religions. * Students will start by doing a quick write about religion in general. They will write everything they can think of that they know. After students have finished writing, we will go through and look for negative words or words/phrases that show bias/assumption. Students will be asked to circle/highlight/etc. any generalizations they may have written or anything they may have said that relays a negative impression. After students have gone through their writing, we will talk about how having a preconceived negative idea of something can impact any new information they could possibly learn. * Students would be put into groups and each group would pick a religion to research. Groups would create a powerpoint presentation and then would be in charge of “teaching” the class about that religion. |
| ***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. | ***Which approach do you think you will follow? Why?***  I would most likely follow the literary approach. I would follow this approach because it seems it would be easiest and the most engaging for me to do (at least at the start). I did all four reading periods last year and will this coming year until I take on two social studies classes the following year. That means I will do two reading and two social studies classes. I feel that the literary approach would be useful as a reading/social studies teacher because it can be very interdisciplinary. I also think students can more often relate more to stories than facts.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***   1. It is very important for teachers to separate their own beliefs from teaching about religions. A teacher should want students to develop their own beliefs and learn the facts without bias. If the teacher can’t keep it strictly academic it could affect how/what the students learn. 2. Students can learn a lot from being able to openly discuss a topic. When it comes to religion though there are bound to be disagreements. The teacher needs to be able to model the proper way to have a friendly conversation, even if it includes disagreement. Students need to feel safe to state their thoughts and opinions even if they do not agree with others. 3. Teachers need to realize they will have students from all different backgrounds and cultures coming to their classroom. Even in a small town school, there is still going to be diversity that a teacher needs to be aware of. 4. Students need to feel safe. The classroom should be like a second home for students (or unfortunately for some, it may be a much better place than their home). They need to be comfortable and know they will be respected and cared for. Teachers need to ensure students feel safe the moment they walk through the door. Students should feel safe to state their opinions. When students feel safe they will learn more and focus better. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  The first thing I would do is ensure I have the appropriate amount of knowledge of religions before I try to incorporate literature/religion lessons.  I would find children’s books with religious themes in them. After Studying the major religions, I would put students in groups and give each group a book. Groups would be responsible for reading their book and making note of which religion is represented throughout their book and what concepts from that religion they were able to find. Then they would present their findings to the class while giving their summary of the book.  I would have to look at my own religious beliefs and make sure I am not incorporating them in any way into the lessons. I know this can be difficult, especially with students who have very strong opinions themselves. At my small school, many students attend the same church as many of their teachers so during school teachers would need to be very careful about making sure the line is there.  It is important to know your students. At the start of the year I would do many different ice-breakers to get to know my students. In addition to that, I would like to just have conversations with students at various times of the day to give them the chance to talk to me and get to know me while I also learn more about them.  When students walk in the door I greet them with a smile and handshake or high-five or even fist bump. Students need to feel welcome as soon as they walk in. Students also have the chance to write down any concerns or questions anonymously in a box in the back of the room. By doing this, student concerns can be addressed without the student having to reveal themselves if they don’t want to be known. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document***  Before reading the AAR document, I would have been very nervous if ever asked to teach religion. As of now I teach 5th grade (reading, but will eventually do social studies too), which does not have any standards that directly hit religion, so I didn’t give religion much thought before reading this. If I ever move grade levels I would feel much more prepared to tackle the 6th grade standards now. In my school every room still has the picture of a flag with the words “in God we trust” on it. I do teach in a school that is in an area that is definitely heavily Christian, so I feel that I would have to really work to make sure that stays separated from our actual studies of the different religions. | ***How will you take all of the information you have gained from AAR and your research and make it comprehensible to your 6th graders?***  Students would complete a very thorough study of a particular religion. First, I would hold a whole class discussion to see what students already know. After answering some questions and maybe clearing up some confusion, we would make a chart for each major religion. As a class, they would write the facts/concepts they know for sure are true (things we covered in the discussion). After the charts are done, students would be put into groups. Each group would be given a picture book (who doesn’t love picture books?) that has some sort of religious theme/concept in it. Each group would have a book from a different religion. After students read the book they would use the charts and what they read to figure out what religion it comes from. After they have figured it out, they will check with me. If they are wrong, I will give them clues and guide them in a better direction. If they are right, they will create a presentation about that religion. They will use their chromebooks to do more research to fill in the gaps missing from our charts. Students will be able to make a powerpoint, poster, or even video if they like. They will be given a few days to work on this to ensure they cover all of the essential information. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |

**Annotated Bibliography**

***Buddhism***

URI Kids :: World Religions. (2002). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.uri.org/kids/world\_budd\_basi.htm

This website gives a basic understanding of what Buddhism is. It breaks the information down into words and phrases that are easy for children to understand. It starts with how Buddhism began and moves on to the Universal Truths and Four Noble Truths. After that it goes into the Eightfold Path, Meditation and Five Precepts. It also gives a brief description of sacred places and celebrations.

Manos, H., & Vivas, J. (2007). Samsara dog. La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller.

“For we are all travelers on the wheel of life. We halt we pause and take new births. Samsara Dog lived many lives. Some of his lives were long. Some lasted only a few days. Dog never remembered them. He lived each life as it came until he learned the most important lesson of all. Based on Buddhist concepts of Samsara and Nirvana this moving story about love and life…”

Samsara Dog is a good book for children ages 8-11. Through the story of a dog who lives many lives it introduces children to the cycle of rebirth and the loss of earthly desires

Grubin, D. (n.d.). The Buddha. Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.pbs.org/show/the-buddha/

“Award-winning filmmaker David Grubin tells the story of the Buddha's life narrated by Richard Gere, a journey especially relevant to our own bewildering times of violent change and spiritual confusion. Experts on the Buddha, representing a variety of disciplines, relate the key episodes of the Buddha's life and reflect on what his journey means for us today.”

This website leads to a video that covers the Buddha’s life. It is nearly two hours long, but there is the option to only watch certain clips of the video. The clips are well labeled with what they each cover.

***Hinduism***

Senker, C. (2008). My Hindu year. New York: PowerKids Press.

This book takes a look at an eight year old boy’s diary as he experiences the different religious festivals throughout the year. Some events included in the book are Divali, Holi and Raksha Bandhan. Students will get a sense of what these religious customs and events are like through the use of buildings, religious articles, books, symbols, and food.

Diwali. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.iboard.co.uk/iwb/Rama-and-Sita-Storybook-Reading-Level-A-1794

This is an interactive story that can be presented on a smartboard or other equivalent board. It gives a brief description of the Diwali festival and the reasons for it. It then tells the story of Prince Rama and his wife Sita, who he had to rescue from a demon-king. The festival celebrates the fact that good beats evil by using lamps to drive out darkness.

Hinduism - World Religions for Kids. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from https://sites.google.com/site/worldreligionsforkids/home/hinduism

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world and is thought to be the oldest living religion. This website will give students the basic facts about Hinduism. It covers their belief in God and how it is different than some other religions. It also covers their belief in reincarnation and karma.

***Islam***

Macaulay-Lewis, E. (n.d.). Introduction to Islam. Retrieved July 19, 2016, from https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/beginners-guide-islamic/a/introduction-to-islam-2

This website does what it says it does. It gives a very good introduction to Islam. It covers all of the basic concepts to give somebody a decent understanding of this religion. It includes the origins of Islam and the life of Muhammad. It talks about the Qur-an and what happened after the death of Muhammad.

Ali-Karamali, S. (2012). Growing up Muslim: Understanding Islamic beliefs and practices. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.

“Author Sumbul Ali-Karamali offers her personal account, discussing the many and varied questions she fielded from curious friends and schoolmates while growing up in Southern California—from diet, to dress, to prayer and holidays and everything in between. She also provides an academically reliable introduction to Islam, addressing its inception, development and current demographics.”

This book is from a personal point of view and covers a lot of common questions people often have about the Muslim life-style.

Five pillars of Islam. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/faithbelief.html

This website gives a description of each of the Five Pillars of Islam. The five pillars are Belief, Worship, Fasting, Almsgiving, and Pilgrimage. The pillars means that believers are meant to testify there is only one God, pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, give to the poor and travel to Mecca.

***Christianity***

Birth of Christianity. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://nsms6thgradesocialstudies.weebly.com/birth-of-christianity.html

This website provides a very good and thorough account of the history of Christianity and how it started. The site includes an interactive map that shows the growth of Christianity. It also includes a timeline of major events. It covers the resurrection of Jesus and briefly summarizes some of his teachings.

Christian Practices - ReligionFacts. (2015, March). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/practices

This site provides an overview of common Christian practices. It includes practices such as Sunday worship, communion, baptism, and reading scriptures. It also includes a section dedicated to just Catholic practices, some which include recognition of seven sacraments, devotion to the virgin Mary and worship of relics and places.

Lewis, C. S. (1986). The chronicles of Narnia. New York: Collier.

This book series is about four siblings who venture into a wardrobe and are plunged into the world of Narnia. While there they meet many creatures and must battle the white witch.

The Chronicles of Narnia series have strong Christian values incorporated into it. One of the main religious symbols in the stories is Aslan the lion who serves as a Christ figure. There is also an instance of one character being turned into a dragon due to his selfishness but is later saved by Aslan.

***Judaism***

Judaism at a glance. (2009). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/ataglance/glance.shtml

This site gives a very quick glimpse into what Judaism is. It is not a very detailed webpage but it is a good start to the very basics. There are other links for more in-depth coverage. On this page it states where it originated and who “founded” it. It includes their core beliefs and talks about what the Torah is.

Gross, J., & Weissman, B. (1992). Celebrate!: A book of Jewish holidays. New York: Platt & Munk.

This is an illustrated book that covers the Jewish holidays throughout the year. It includes Sukkot , Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, Hanukkah, the celebration of the harvest, and the festival of lights.

Kids of Courage. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://www.kidsofcourage.com/?p=1297

Comparing and contrasting Judaism and Christianity. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/co/Comparing\_and\_Contrasting\_Judaism\_and\_Christianity

Both of these sites compare and contrast Judaism and Christianity. The first site is easier to follow as it is a simple chart that contains the building of worship, the day of worship, number of followers, and their belief about God and Jesus. The second site compares those things as well but goes more in-depth and covers a few more concepts such as sin and salvation.