***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***  **History Strand.**  **Topic**: Early Civilization.  **Content Statement: 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.**  **Topic:**  Human Systems.  **Content Statement 7.** Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today.  **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, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism**  Cory, S. (1986). *The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error 2.* Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Moody Press. Retrieved from World Religions Index (1997) <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/table2.html>  <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/buddhism.html>  <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/hinduism.html>  <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/islam.html>  <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/judaism.html>  <http://wri.leaderu.com/wri-table2/judaism.html>  This source categorizes six religions by six categories. The religions are Biblical Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Primitive Religions. The categories are introduction, God, man/universe, salvation/afterlife, morals, and worship. The goal of this page is to equip Christians to understand other World faiths and religious philosophies. This site would be a good overview of basic facts about all five of the religions, keeping in mind that is was produced by an American Christian organization to help Christians understand other religious beliefs.  ICT Teachers. (2007) *Religious Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.icteachers.co.uk/resources/resources_re.htm>  I included this source because it has many teaching resources about each of the five major religions we are reviewing. There are activities, PowerPoints, worksheets and even some songs. These resources were submitted by other teachers. The sources I checked out were very good and could save lots of time. It is definitely a site I would check out when preparing lessons on religion.  **Buddhism**  Antoine, J. (2013) *Girl Spins a Blade*. Amaterasu Press.  In this fictional tale, Emily Kane has to fight off a black-ops team hunting her. After, she goes to her Granny for help in finding spiritual renewal in the pantheon of the Hindus and Buddhists of Nepal. The story entwines the culture and beliefs of Buddhism in the short adventure.  Barrow, M. (2013) Buddhism Religion. Retrieved from   [http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/religion/  buddhism.htm](http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/religion/%20%20%20%20%20%20buddhism.htm)  This informational page provides information about Buddhism, from its beginning in North East India. There are basic facts given including the symbols, sacred texts, and major beliefs such as The Three Signs of Being, The Four Noble Truths, The Noble Eight-Fold Path and The 5 Precepts of Buddhism. There are many different types of Buddhism and the article touches on five of the types.  This article was written by a teacher and the information is presented in student friendly way. She also lists some games and other resource links at the end.  Townsend, D. (2015) *Shantideva How to Wake Up a Hero*.   Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.  This fictional story of Shantideva, a Buddhist monk’s teachings on how to become a superhero. He tells how anyone can develop perfect bravery and unbounded compassion. The book has illustrations painted in the traditional Tibetan style to accompany the tale.  **Hinduism**  Hinduism. (2015) Retrieved from ReligionFacts   <http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism>  This article starts with an overview and summary of Hinduism, including where it started and some of its movement throughout the world. At the end of the article are links to more in-depth information, such as the Hindu Beliefs, Hindu History, and Hindu Rituals & Practices. The information is presented in a factual way but the author remains anonymous and includes a statement to rely more on the official world websites that were cited than his opinions offered.  Hindu Kids Universe (2009-2014) Retrieved from Dharma Universe  LLC websites <http://www.hindukids.org/>  This is an interactive site where students can uncover the basics of Hinduism. There are many topics covered in a student friendly format, including basic Hindu beliefs. They can learn about Hindu words from a – z, along with Hindu Dharma, vegetarianism, the Tilaka and about the meaning of saffron. There are cultural connections as well, as students can read stories about Ramayana or the life of Buddha and discover about the many Hindu Festivals.  Johari, H. (1998) *The Birth of the Ganga*. India: Inner Traditions  This is a translated book with many illustrations including 46 reproductions of the many Indian saints and gods from Hindu scripture and history. The mythological story is about the origin of the Ganga river based on the goddess Ganga. The story talks Ganga providing a means of purification for all the human beings on earth, and the tradition of pilgrims still traveling to the Ganga River to worship and obtain blessings  Whelan, G. (2000) *Homeless Bird.* New York: Harper Collins.  Discussion questions for *Homeless Bird*. Retrieved from https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/reading-guides/RG-9780064408196.pdf  This fictional story was inspired by a newspaper article about the real thirteen year old widows in India today. The story is about a young thirteen year old, named Koly, who has been sold for a dowry into an arranged marriage. The story shows how Koly endures and then ultimately rejects some oppressive Hindu traditions.  **Islam**  Ahmed, N.A. Phd. (n.d.) History of Islam. An encyclopedia of   Islamic history. <https://historyofislam.com/the-quran/>  The article gives a brief overview of the significance of the Quran in Islamic history. It explains that it is a book of wisdom.  Following is a translation of the Quran done over a three year period by Dr. Nazeer Ahmed. He uses simple American English to translate the Quran. His goal was to stay true to the literal Words of the Quran.  Huda. (2016) *Introduction to Islam*. Retrieved from  <http://islam.about.com/od/basicbeliefs/p/intro.htm>  Along with explaining the basic Islam faith, this site also include articles by Huda on the Top Myths About Islam, including that most Muslims are Arab, or that Islam oppresses women. There is also an article on Jihad in Islam and Allah (God) in Islam. In both of these articles Huda quotes the holy text of the Quran.  Khan, H. (2012) *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book  of Colors.* Chronicle Books.  The world of Islam is described in pictures and words by a young Muslim girl. The book talks about clothing, food and other important elements of Islamic culture. It is recommended for all ages.  The Origin of the Quran. (n.d.) Retrieved from Why Islam?   http://www.whyislam.org/the-origin-of-the-quran/#  This is a brochure published by WHY ISLAM that explains the origins of the Quran. Included is information on how the Quran has been preserved, who wrote it. The article explains in detail how the Quran was written (by God) through Muhammad. There are five arguments presented as to reasons that God was the writer.  **Christianity**  Christianity: Background, Basic Beliefs, and Sacred Texts. (2002)  Retrieved from United Religions Initiative   <http://uri.org/kids/world_chri_basi.htm>  This site is easy to read and includes basic information on the formation of Christianity, what Christians believe, there sacred texts and why there are so many different kinds of Christians. There are also tabs that discuss celebrations, and sacred spaces. The resource link has Teacher Resources. There are more links to other Christian faiths and links to books and videos as well.  It is produced by the United Religions Initiative. Their vision is that “people from all different faiths can work together to make the world a better place for everyone.” The site seems unbiased and gives factual information. It also includes tabs with other faith information.  Fairchild, M. (2016) Basic Christian Beliefs. Retrieved from  http://christianity.about.com/od/christiandoctrines/a/  basicdoctrines.htm  The site begins by giving the core Christian beliefs and mentions that there are many denominations and faith groups. The link takes you to 41 subcategories in denominations. There are other links to continually grow your knowledge. The site lists the core beliefs of most Christian faiths. Other topics include denominations and movements, Christian symbols. There are links that would not be suitable for secular teaching, such as Holiday Tips and Advice for Christians dealing with holiday challenges. These pages tell how to avoid the secularism of holidays. But there many informative pages that include factual information such as on major events like baptism, wedding and funeral.    Peach, D. (2010-2016) 10 Basic Christian Beliefs. Retrieved from   [http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/10-basic-   christian-beliefs/](http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/10-basic-%20%20%20%20%20%20%20christian-beliefs/)  This article lists ten of the most fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. It is meant to be a quick overview of what Christians believe. The ten topics are God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Bible, Man, Salvation, Church, Angels, Future, and Prayer. Each topic is followed by an explanation. David Peach, the author has written 207 articles on what Christians want to know! He has a ministry to work with the Deaf.  **Judaism**  Abraham, P. (1996) Riverhead Books.  In this fictional story, a young girl, the eldest in her family rebels against her Rabbi father as she becomes a young adult. The story addresses some of the religious and family rules that Rachel rebels against including getting a library card so she can read English romance books and wearing of nylons. The story examines the power of family and religion in the Hasidic community.  Israel & Judaism Studies. The education website of the NSW   Jewish Board of Deputies. Retrieved from  <http://ijs.org.au/Beliefs/default.aspx>  This site is developed by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. It is an educational site that has a lot of information on Judaism from ancient to modern times. There is a story of the Jewish People that includes a timeline of significant events in Jewish formation. There are pages on the Rites of Passages of birth and Bar/Bat Mitzvah along with festivals and feasts in the Jewish Calendar. The significance of Jerusalem is explained on a page. There are many external links at the end.  Since this site is developed by the Jewish Board, I feel the information is accurate, but I must be sure to only include appropriate information for teaching and there is plenty.  Rich, T.R. (1995-2011) Judaism 101. Retrieved from   <http://www.jewfaq.org/toc.htm>  This site has a plethora of information on Judaism. It covers Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices and customs. The language is simple and easy to read and understand. Words are defined. The author labels the page’s information as basic, intermediate, and advanced, along with gentile (for the minimal a gentile should know).  The author, Tracey Rich describes herself as a “traditional, observant Jew who has put in a lot of research.” She states she is not a rabbi or an expert, but her site does get copied a lot by “Ask A Rabbi”. She spent over ten years developing her site. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **Buddhism** is a religion that was founded by Siddharta Gautama around 580 BCE in Nepal. Gautama is known as the Buddha, or awakened one. People who practice Buddhism are called Buddhists. Buddhists do not believe in a personal creator God. They believe that there is a cycle of birth, life and death and rebirth that repeats unless someone gains Enlightenment which will break the cycle. The breaking of the cycle is called Nirvana. Buddhists try to reach Nirvana by following the Buddha’s teaching and by meditating.    Buddhists worship in temples or in their home. In temple, monks may chant from religious texts. The Buddhist worshipper may sit on the floor barefoot facing an image of Buddha, but will make sure that their feet face away from the image. The  Worshippers may make offerings of flowers, candles, incense, or put water at a shrine. Buddhists will worship alone by meditating or reading from Buddhist holy books.  There are monthly religious days, often coinciding with the full moon. These are often times that the Buddhists go to temple.  The sacred text or Holy Book of Buddhism is called the Tripitaka or Pali Canon. Pali is the ancient Indian language that the book was first written. The English translation takes up almost forty volumes. The book contains the teachings of the Buddha. These were originally passed on orally and eventually written down by two sets of Buddhists. Buddha’s teachings are often divided as, Three Signs of Beings, Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These are studied by Buddhists as they search for their own Enlightenment.  There are different types of Buddhism that have arisen as Buddhism branched to different countries.  **Hinduism** is traced to India around 1500 to 2500 BCE, in the Indus Valley, but has no set originator. There is not one set god that all Hindus believe in. Some Hindus believe in Shiva or Vishnu, whom they regard as the only true God, and others, Brahman, the one ultimate, impersonal, spiritual reality over all nature. Hinduism has no set creed to follow.  One Hindu fundamental belief is in the authority of the Vedas, which is the oldest Indian sacred text, and the authority of the Brahmans or priests. Hindus believe that a person’s soul can leave one body and go to another at death, or in other words reincarnation. They also believe in the laws of karma that determine destiny in this life and the next.  Hinduism is divided as “Popular” Hinduism which expresses itself through the worship of gods, offerings, rituals and prayers and the “Philosophical” Hinduism which encompasses meditating, yoga and studying ancient philosophical texts. There are other sects and schools of Hinduism.  **Islam** is a monotheistic religion, which believes in one Allah, or God, who is One without partners to share in His divinity. Islam, the name of the religion, is from an Arabic root word that means peace and submission. According to Islamic beliefs one can only find peace in one’s life by submitting to Allah in heart, soul and deed. The believers of Islam are called Muslims. The Muslims believe Allah caused all things to exist. Allah created and maintains all things. Allah is the only one who should be worshipped.  The Muslims recite certain verses of prayer each day, at certain times of the day. They believe that everything they do in life is an act of worship. There are also five formal acts of worship which help a Muslim’s faith and obedience grow stronger. These are called the Five Pillars of Islam.  The Islam holy text is called the Qur’an. It was sent over 1400 years ago in the Arabic language, via Muhammad. Therefore, Arabic serves as a common language to Islam believers, even though 90% of the world’s billion Muslims do not speak Arabic as their native language.  **Christianity** has origins to the birth of Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago in Palestine, which is today’s Israel. Christians believe that Jesus’ mother was a peasant girl, Mary and his father was the Holy Spirit of God. Thus Jesus, was both man and God. Jesus birth and adult ministry is chronicled in the New Testament of the Bible. Jesus was resurrected and his followers created the Christian Church. There are Christians living all over the world.  People who practice Christianity are called Christians. There are some core Christian beliefs that are central to almost all. These are that there is only one God; God is three in one or a Trinity; God is omniscient or knows all things. The list goes onto include attributes of God, but also includes the Holy Spirit is God and Jesus Christ is God, who became a man who was fully God and fully man. Christians also believe in an eternity after death with Jesus Christ. There is a hell, which is a place of eternal punishment.  Christians worship together in churches and usually on Sunday, the Sabbath. The worship includes readings, hymns, prayers and a sermon. Many services include the Holy Eucharist, which is the sharing of bread and wine representing the sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood.  The sacred book is the Holy Bible. The Christian Bible is made up of two parts: The Old Testament which is basically the Hebrew scriptures of Jesus’ time and the New Testament which includes Jesus’ life and writings about the early church.  The Christian faith spread all over the world from Jesus’ followers. This created many different interpretations, disagreements and conflicts which led to many different branches of Christianity today. There are three basic streams of Christianity: Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic.  The religion of **Judaism** has no official dogma, or formal mandatory beliefs that one must keep. There are 13 Principles of Faith that were developed by Rambam or Maimonides, a medieval Jewish scholar that most Jews believe. Judaism does believe in one single, omnipotent, incorporeal God, who is the creator and rulers of the universe. People who practice Judaism are called Jews.  Prayer is important in the life of a Jew, and many Jews pray three times daily and say many blessing. Prayer is only directed to God. The name of God is very sacred to observant Jews and most will write G-d, to make sure no one ever defaces the name.  Judaism focuses on relationships between God and mankind, between God and the Jewish people and between the Jewish people and Israel. The Jewish faith believes in creationism and accepts the relationship of God and Abraham that then moves forward (1900 BCE). The obligations of beliefs are dependent on the type of Jew. There are Orthodox, which say laws are absolute and unchanging. There are Conservative Jews who believe laws change and evolve over time and there are Reform or Reconstructionist Jews who say the laws are guidelines that you choose to follow.  The Jews do have a holy book. It is called the Torah and it was given to Moses in written form with oral commentary. The Torah is the written part and the oral component is now written in the Talmud. The Torah is sometimes referred to as the first five books of the Bible, which make up The Law. Torah can also mean all Jewish law and tradition, which NEVI’IM, (the prophets) and KETHUVIM (the writings) or the books of the Christian Old Testament. Reading from these scriptures is a part of the worship service of Jews. |
| ***Station 2 (15 points)***  1) Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.  2) Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.  3) 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***  1a) Teachers must remind students of the diversity even in the same religion, as well as between different religions.  1b) Start with the familiar, before moving onto the unfamiliar. For example use a tradition students are familiar with to discuss the differences between the beliefs, such as the Christian faith.  1c) Listen for generalization statements, such as “All Muslims are violent” and change it to a qualified statement, such as “I have heard that Muslims are violent – is this true?”  2a) One best practice is to frame a unit or lesson on religion prior to teaching by reminding students that there is a great diversity of religious expressions within certain religions and between religious traditions.  2b) Another best practice is to use a tradition that students are familiar with and give examples of the diversity that occurs in that tradition. Then have the students use that understanding with the other less familiar traditions and world views.  2c) It would be a best practice to explain that teaching religion is legal and appropriate for public schools to students before the unit or lesson.  2d) Another best practice would be to help the student understand the goal of teaching religion. The goal is to better understand how religion plays an important part in human culture and growth. It is not studied to promote religion or any particular religious practice.  3a) First the teacher must recognize his or her own views and background in a particular religion and be aware of any bias or opinions he or she may have.  3b) Second, study up on the religions and get training in religious studies, so you can present the material accurately. Take a religious studies course, or attend a workshop on teaching religion. *The teacher must be familiar with the basic outlooks, experiences and practices of the widespread living religious traditions. (p. 18)*  3c) Use multiple quality resources to prepare for teaching about religion or a specific tradition. Have multiple sources ready for the students, which can include literature that encompasses the tradition and its practices or beliefs. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  1) Allow students to brainstorm what they know about the different religion(s) as the unit is introduced. Ask what they have heard. Ask what they know. Make sure their statements are not generalizations, and change those that are. Discuss how you can prove or disprove what they have stated. Talk about bias and news media influence.  2) Start a discussion about the churches in town. List them. Determine which ones are Christian.  Discuss what students may know about a certain church. What day do they meet on? Do they have daily services? Wednesday services?  Make a web with Christian in the Center. Then list the churches. Continue the web adding details the students know about the church. Such as meets on Sunday only. Have Wednesday services. Have a youth group. The pastor is male or female. Then have the students notice similarities and differences. Note that all of these churches are Christian. Other traditions are similar. Not every practice or belief is identical, but the tradition will have at least one common thread.  3) Begin a unit by presenting information to the students in multiple ways. Include factual information about the beginning of the religion, but also include current information. A fictional or real story that discusses the religious traditions or customs of the religion you are presenting can be read to the students, or read by them. |
| ***Station 3 (15 points)***  1) Understand the difference between the secular academic and devotional approaches to religion, and consistently use the secular academic approach.  2) Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom.  3) Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom.  4) 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?***  Ideally I would like to follow the Cultural Studies Approach. This approach gives the most balanced view of religions. It allows for the history of the religion, but goes further to help students recognize that religion is not isolated and is part of the culture. The Cultural Studies Approach considers the social powers of religious leaders and the ways race, class and gender developed from the religion. It also helps understand how religious beliefs and expressions have influenced the politics of an area. This approach fits into the idea of teaching a topic more thoroughly and would allow the students to be critical thinkers and reach conclusion and analyze the development and current trend of religions.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  1) As teachers we must consistently use the secular academic approach. Some key elements in doing this were included in the reading. My understandings are It is important to teach religion, but equally as important to keep the teaching as academic and informative, not devotional or confirmative. I need to be teaching religious awareness and exposing students to religions, but not expecting acceptance or imposing any religion on them. The students need to be studying about religion, but not about the practicing of religion. I need to be exposing students to varied religious views, but never imposing a particular view to the students.  2) As a teacher I need to make sure the students understand what the academic goal of studying religion entails. I have to make sure that the goal in class is to understand the different religious views and how they have influenced history, culture and even some government policies. Students need to be reminded that we do not need to agree on our different religious views, and in school we will not judge the beliefs of others. If questions about what is right or true are brought up, as the teacher I should distinguish these as theological questions that are best answered outside of school, by their parents or religious leaders, if they are part of a church.  3) As the teacher, I should try to know the religious make-up of my students prior to studying the religions. It would be good to make sure I had some understanding of their beliefs. But, whenever the students share about their beliefs, I need to be ready to diffuse any general statements they make. The students should not be sharing what they think others believe.  4) Hopefully, this trust has been developed previously in the class. But to me, respect and tolerance means the classmates need to listen to each other’s statements without commenting. Other students should be able to ask questions about what was said, but not make comments or criticisms. Students should tell their own stories, and not repeat gossip. The students need to affirm each other.  The students should also be able to raise questions or concerns privately or anonymously to the teacher. I, as the teacher, must always remember to not promote any belief and to stay academic in my answers, referring students to parents and church leaders when the questions are theological in nature. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  1) Pre-teaching: The students must be made aware of their own ideas, biases and assumptions they have about religion. One way to do this would be to have the students reflect in writing about the religion. What do they know about Judaism? They could free-write for a few minutes. The teacher could collect these responses, read them over, and select the key phrases to go over in the next class. The teacher should also use this knowledge to watch certain students’ reactions as the topic is discussed.  2) Before beginning the unit talk to the students about the sensitivity of the topic of religion. Ask them to spend a few minutes thinking about how they feel about religion. Is it something they like to talk about? Are they self-conscious to admit their religious belief? Are they willing to wear a shirt advertising their belief? Do they think they know about religion already? Ask for volunteers to share. Explore why or why not they feel intimidated. Use this time to set some ground rules for the topic. Have the students create the rules and post them for the unit. Also, discuss that the religious study is not going to be about practicing or accepting a certain religion or belief, but about understanding the belief and how it has grown, or influenced the development of culture. |
| ***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?***  I live in an area where religion is held as a private belief, not necessary to be discussed in school classes. This reading gave me an insight into why teaching religion is important, background to support the teaching of religion, and cautions to stay within the bounds of constitutional.  I liked the explanation of the four methodological approaches to teaching religion. I was drawn to the cultural study approach, but now realize how much more prepared I need to be to accomplish this method. I can see me drawing more from the other three methods more in the first years of teaching until I can fully comprehend all the nuances that accomplish the culture method.  One thing I learned is that I need to keep the three central premises of academic learning about religion p. i, (“religions are internally diverse; religions are dynamic; and religions are embedded in culture”) in the forefront, as my guide, when researching and teaching about religion.  I was especially struck by Premise Three that states (p.8) “Learning about religion as a social/ cultural phenomenon also helps people recognize, understand, and critically analyze how religion has been and will continue to be used to inspire and sometimes justify the full range of human agency from the heinous to the heroic.”I taught 6-7-8 grade social studies for 2 years, ten years ago, without having any specific training in SS. I used the textbook. But even then, I saw the tie-ins of the way religions formed decisions, not always favorable, to historical events. I like that I am empowered to help students see these events with a historical view and form their own conclusions.  Also from Premise Three, p. 8, I read, “Finally, those trained in religious studies learn to question the accuracy of absolutist claims such as “Islam is a religion of peace” or “Judaism and Islam are incompatible” or “All religions are fundamentally the same,” thereby helping to deepen discourse about religion in the public sphere. Learning about religion is no guarantee that religious bigotry and chauvinism will cease, but it will make it more difficult for such bigotry and chauvinism to be unwittingly reproduced and promoted.*”*  I feel this premise demands I research and learn about the religions and traditions I am to teach. It is negligent to try and teach without my own understanding. When I taught the two years of social studies it was at a Catholic school. There was some hesitation to explore the heinous acts done in the name of religion. But I did. And, I feel in a public school I am even more compelled to present the evidence, from reliable sources, to the students who can create their own opinions.  Lastly, the thoughts I am left with are that it is important to teach religion, but equally as important to keep the teaching academic and informative, not devotional or confirmative. To teach awareness of and expose students to religions, but not expect acceptance or imposing any religion on the student. To remember we are studying about religion, but not about the practice of religion. I am exposing students to varied religious views, but not imposing a particular view on them. If I can keep these ideas in mind, and research my topic, I should be able to do a good job in helping wipe out the illiteracy of religion in my students. | ***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 feel that the best practice to teach the Cultural Studies Approach is going to be to expand on the details of one religion versus trying to describe all five major religions.  But in order to touch on all of the religions, I would first have the students work in groups to research basic information on all five religions in specific categories. This would include basic beliefs, founder, how many practice, God belief, sacred books, etc. This information would be shared with the class by each group’s addition to the table to touch on the variety of faiths.  Then the class would study one religion in more detail, in conjunction with talking of the early civilizations. I might choose Buddhism. Buddhism began in India, but traveled to China via the Silk Road. It developed as the major religion in the Tang Dynasty. The students would study how the Buddhist faith traveled and influenced the rulers in China.  The Buddhist symbols are found in art around the world. We can analyze these symbols and see how religion has influence art around the world. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |