***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. | * #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.   #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**   Clear Vision Trust. (n.d.). Teachers: Clear Vision: audio-visual Buddhism resources for schools and home-use. Clear Vision Trust: Audio-visual Buddhism resources for schools and home use. Retrieved July 26, 2013, from http://www.clear-vision.org/Schools/Teachers.aspx  *This website provides many interactive ways to present Buddhism. There is information provided for teachers and students, and it is divided into appropriate age levels.*  Mary. (((n.d.))). Retrieved from http://www.buddha101.com/index.htm  *This website provides information about the history, philosophy, and practice of Buddhism. It was also named one of the best educational resources on the web.*  Metcalf, F., & Yoon, I. M. S. (2002). *Buddha in Your Backpack, Everyday Buddhism for Teens*. Berkeley: Ulysses Press.  *This book is written at a teen perspective and is about the life of Buddha. It would provide student and idea of what it would be like to be a teen that practices Buddhism.*   * **Hinduism**   Hinduism Facts, Facts about Hindu Religion, India, Kids. (n.d.). Retrieved  26, 2013, from http://hinduismfacts.org/  *This website is a good resource for students looking up information about Hinduism. There is a list of what can be found on the site on the left hand side, which students can click on and access as needed.*  *Information on Hinduism for Kids*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 26, 2013, from http://homeworkhelp.stjohnssevenoa  ks.com/religion/hinduism.htm  *This website also provides many of the key facts about Hinduism that students will need to know. It also answers many questions that they may be asked to look up or that they may have for you.*  Verma, D. (2008). *Hinduism for Children: Activity Workbook*. n/a: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.  *This book teaches Hinduism to children in the unique way of having them complete activities to figure out answers.*   * **Islam**   Abdel-Fattah, R. (2008). *Does my head look big in this?*. New York: Scholastic.  *This book is about a young Muslim girl who starts wearing a hijab regularly. It discusses her experiences when wearing it. This would give the students a perspective as to why Muslim women wear a hijab, and what it is like for them to wear one.*  Addasi, M., Gannon, N., & Albitar, N. (2010). *Time to pray*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.  *This book is about a young Muslim girl who visits her grandmother and talks about her experience with prayer while there. This would be a good way for students to learn about how and why Muslims pray.*  *Timeline of Islam – Religion Facts.* (n.d.).Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/i  ndex.htm  *This webpage provides you with links to important facts about Islam on the left hand side of the page. It also provides you with links to other resources about Islam.*   * **Christianity**   *Christianity – Religion Facts.* (n.d.).Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://www.religionfacts.com/christ  ianity/index.htm  *This webpage provides you with links to important facts about Christianity on the left hand side of the page. It also provides you with links to other resources about Christianity.*  *Christianity vs. Judaism – Difference and Comparison* | Diffen. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://www.diffen.com/difference/Ch  ristianity\_vs\_Judaism  *I believe that many students will get confused about the similarities and differences between Christianity and Judaism. This site provides them with some of the similarities and differences to look at.*  *Early Developments*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://www.patheos.com/Library/Chr  istianity/Historical-Development/Ear  l*y*-Developments.html.  *This webpage provides links on the left hand side where students can find important facts about Christianity and it’s development.*   * **Judaism**   *Judaism – Religion Facts.* (n.d.).Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://www.religionfacts.com/judais  m/index.htm  *This webpage provides you with links to important facts about Judaism on the left hand side of the page. It also provides you with links to other resources about Judaism.*  *Judaism: The Early Period*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2013, from http://  ww.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/soc  iety/judaism-the-early-period.html  *This website goes through each stage of the development of Judaism from the very beginning to modern Judaism.*  Lieberman, L. (2010). *The book of trees.* Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers.  *This book follows a young girl who spends her summer studying in Israel. It also has a slight love story which may interest more of the girl students, and keep their attention while teaching them something as well.* | * **Buddhism**   Buddhism was founded around 500 BC in India, and it is the world’s fourth largest religion. Most Buddhists or people who practice Buddhism live in China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. They worship in a temple or mediation hall. There are three major divisions of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Their sacred text is the Pali Canon, and their original language is Pali. They believe that nothing is permanent.   * **Hinduism**   The roots of Hinduism can be traced back to as far as 10000 BC, which makes it the world’s oldest religion. Most Hindus, or people who practice Hinduism, live in India. Hindu’s worship in a temple, and they believe in one God, Brahman. Their scripture is in Sanskrit, which is their language. Hindus show deep respect for rivers, mountains, trees, animals (especially cows), and other natural things. Most do not eat beef or pork, and the cow is very sacred to them. The ultimate goal of all Hindus is salvation.   * **Islam**   Islam began around 200 AD, and is the world’s second largest religion. Most Muslims, or people who practice Islam, live in the Middle East and North Africa. Muslims worship in a mosque, and they believe in one God, Allah. Their scripture is the Koran, and it is written in Arabic, which is their language. There are two denominations of Islam, the Sunni and Shiite. The ultimate goal of all Muslims is to submit to Allah’s will and find paradise after death.   * **Christianity**   Christianity began around 30 AD, and it is the world’s largest religion. The main locations of Christians in the world are Europe and North and South America. Christians worship in churches, chapels, cathedrals, basilicas, and meeting halls. They believe in God. Their scripture is the Bible, and their original languages were Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. There are several denominations of Christianity including three of the major ones: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant. The Christian purpose is to know, love, and serve God.   * **Judaism**   Judaism began around 2500 BC. The main locations of Jews in the world are Israel, Europe, and the United States. Jews worship in a synagogue, and they believe in one God. Their sacred text is the Tanakh with the Talmud, and their language is Hebrew. The Jewish purpose is to be obedient to God. |
| ***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. | * One should not rely solely on a textbook. Textbooks tend to simplify all information, and especially that given on religion. In order to accommodate this downfall, teachers should use charts or other resources to help further students knowledge of the religion being discussed.   Before beginning a lesson or unit on religion you should make sure and distinguish the difference between studying religion and practicing religion.   * **The Historical Approach**   *This approach is used when a teacher discusses the origin of each religion and how it has since developed. They also discuss what has influenced the religion.*  **The Literary Approach**  *This approach generally is used in language arts classrooms. When students read texts about religion, teachers use this approach to help students see how religion influences culture and gain an appreciation for the religions being discussed.*  **The Traditions-Based Approach**  *This approach is usually used in the higher grades. The teacher focuses on religious traditions: beliefs, texts, rituals, traditions, origins, and holidays.*  **The Cultural Studies Approach**  *This approach is used by people who are trained in religious studies. It uses a combination of the other three approaches, and it builds on and enhances them.*   * One should discuss with students why media is not always reliable for information about religion. You can also discuss why you should not use Wikipedia or YouTube to research religion. This can get the students talking about why this is and why they shouldn’t do so.   Before beginning teaching about religion, make sure the students view the classroom as a place for tolerance, respect, and honesty. Tell students it is important to not make generalizations about any religion, explain how judgments could affect others, and tell them to not be afraid to ask questions. | * Instead of always relying on a textbook, I plan on doing more project based assignments with the children when discussing religion. I think it will more beneficial to them to do the research and find the facts and important aspects of each religion on their own. * I will begin my teaching of social studies using the historical approach and providing students with the facts or having them find the facts on their own. I hope to eventually be able to combine more of the approaches and use them in my teaching methods. I would especially like to incorporate the literary approach, because I think it would be very beneficial for the students to read stories and books about the different religions. * I will first have the students sign a class contract that says we will all respect one another’s opinions and beliefs and not be judgmental. I will then divide the students into equal groups to do research on an assigned religion. They will have to work with their groups to present the religion to the class based on the provided requirements. This allows us to have all the religions presented, and since the groups were chosen at random there should be little or no bias. |
| ***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. | * Due to my lack of experience in Social Studies, until I become more comfortable with the content I will definitely be using the historical approach they mentioned in the text. I will talk about the origin of the religions that need to be taught and how they developed. This includes the political and cultural influences that society had on shaping the religion * I understand that is important to teach the facts and stay away from any religion practices, while still allowing the students to learn what is necessary about each religion. I also understand that there may be different religions present in the classroom, and it is important that all students know to respect one another’s beliefs and opinions about religion before beginning to discuss it. | * Prior to beginning a unit or lesson on religion, I will sit down with my class and talk with them about what we will be discussing. I will make sure and discuss that they are expected to respect one another, and to not be afraid to share their opinions on the topic. I think it would be a good idea to have a class contract that everyone signs in agreement to respect one another during this unit or lesson * I think it would be a good idea to teach religions through project based learning. By assigning a religion to a student or group of students, you can have them do the research and come up with the necessary facts about the religion they are assigned. This allows the students to teach one another about the different religions, and you can stand back and assist them with research and add any left out facts when they are finished. However, I think it would be important to provide students with sources to use so that they do not come across any part of the religion they shouldn’t be researching in school. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | After reading the AAR: Guidelines for Teaching about Religion, I have to agree with the four things they said about teaching religion.  1) Teaching awareness of religion, not teaching the students to accept certain religions. 2) Studying religions and not practicing them in the classroom. 3) Exposing the students to different religions and not imposing on their beliefs. 4) Educating the students about different religions and not prompting them to think a certain way.  I think that by following these guidelines, I will successfully be able to teach religion. I also really like the frequently asked questions they listed in the reading. I think that these would be a good point of reference when teaching religion in the classroom. A lot of times students catch us off guard with their questions, and I’ve always been taught that if you don’t know an answer say, “You know what, that is something I would like to look into as well, let me get back to you on that.” If the students ask one of these questions, we have the opportunity to look up their suggested answers and use them as a response.    I also believe that one should not cross the line between academics and devotionals. In order not to do this, I think that it would be a good idea to try and not share your beliefs with the students. (This is going to be more difficult the smaller the school, because the students may attend the same place of worship as you.) While I’m not saying to hide your religion or be ashamed of it, it is probably best to keep these beliefs as quiet as possible, so they don’t ask too many questions. | Before teaching a unit that will involve religion I will first sit my students down and have a discussion as a class about what we will be doing. It is important that they know from the beginning that we respect one another’s thoughts and opinions. I will also have them sign a contract that says they agree to respect one another. I plan on straying from the textbook when we discuss religion, and I think it is important that they are aware of this. Like the reading stated, students need more information than what the textbook generally provides. My entire unit on religion would persist of group work. The students will be randomly assigned to groups in order to represent each religion. After each group is assigned a religion, they will be given a folder of information that I have provided. This will include some print resources, websites they can go to to conduct research, and the rubric for the assignment as a whole. The students will be given an allotted time to complete everything that is expected from them and answer all questions about the religion that they are expected to answer. At the end of all of their research and planning they will present their religion to the class so that everyone gets all of the information they need to know about each religion. I will then spend a few days reviewing each religion, and making sure there are no unanswered questions. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |