***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***  ONLS:  Strand: Geography  Topic: Human Systems  Content Statements: Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of the major world religions.  Annotated bibliography: Placed at the end of the chart. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  Buddhism: Buddhism is the philosophy of awakening. Buddhism teaches its followers to develop love and kindness. The followers of Buddhism do not believe in a god. They believe in understanding fear to help accept the things that cannot be changed. The main teaching of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are all connected and are the center of Buddhism.  Hinduism: One of the main ideas of Hinduism is reincarnation. They believe that souls live on after death and are all living things can be reborn. Hinduism is the major religion of India. There are three different gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, that are worshipped. Each of these figures represents something different. Brahma is the god of knowledge and the creator of the universe. Vishnu protects the people from evil and preserves the universe. Shiva represents all change and is the god of destruction and rebuilding. Hindus also believe in karma, which is the idea of rewards or punishment based on our choices.  Islam – Islam was started by Mohammed. They believe in one god, Allah. The believers of Islam must submit to the will of Allah. Mohammed is proclaimed to be the prophet of Allah. The Qur’an or Koran is the book of Islam.  Christianity: Christianity is based on the teaching of Jesus Christ. Christians believe in one God, and that the one God is made of three separate parts: The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the Creator and the Son is the Word (Jesus Christ). Christianity follows the teachings of the Bible.  Judaism: The Jewish religion believes in one god. The basis of Judaism is when Moses received the Ten Commandments from God and passed them to his people. The Jewish people look at themselves as the Chosen People. They believe they are chosen to follow God’s law and serve him. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the people believed it was their fault because of their failures. |
| ***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***  **Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.**  In the *Teacher’s Guide to Religion in the Public Schools,* it is explained that teachers need to work to make students aware of other religions and beliefs. However, the teachers cannot force any certain religion on to the students. The second key point is that teachers need to show that each religion is valid, but again, not forcing the students to believe the religion.  **Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.**  As stated above, teachers must not push a specific religion onto the students. The first key point is to stick with the historical facts of the religions. The teachers are there to teach the history and development of the religion. The second key point is to keep personal feelings out of the teaching. I am personally a Christian, but that doesn’t mean I need to express my beliefs to my students. I think the best practice is to keep my personal thoughts out of my teaching to stay unbiased.  **Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.**  The first key point is here is to represent each religion in an equal manner. They all need to be discussed and presented in an equal amount of time. As a teacher, I shouldn’t spend two weeks on Judaism but a day on the other four religions. They need to be shown equal importance. The second key point to being fair or neutral is how a teacher presents the religion. The teacher should show equal excitement or interest in each religion in order to expect the same from the students. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  **Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.**  I am a strong believer in students researching what they find interesting. I think it provides better results and less discipline problems. I would have the students pick the religion that interests them the most. They would do a little research on their own, and then they would come together with their research to compare and contrast their findings. They would then compare and contrast with the other groups that did the different religions.  **Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.**  I would use the novel study to show best practice. The students would get the history of the religion and I would be keeping my personal beliefs out of the picture.  **Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.**  I would let the students choose a religion and then they would make a presentation about that religion based on images only. They would have to explain why they picked the images they used. |
| ***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 think I would focus on the historical approach. This approach appeals to me because I have never taught world religion before. The historical approach is very straightforward and I think the best way to keep any personal thoughts out of my teaching.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  I feel that the first competency is directing teachers to approach the lesson in a direct academic way. We are not teaching students to choose one religion over the others. We are only trying to explain to students the different types of religions. The second competency is explaining to teachers that disagreements will happen, but we need to handle them. We need to allow students to discuss their differences and ideas, but we need to keep it friendly and open. The third competency goes along with the second. We need to be aware that our students have different beliefs and we need to manage them all as we teach. This should be managed by teaching the historical and cultural aspect of the religion and not the devotional. The fourth competency wraps up the others. If we allow our students to openly discuss their ideas instead of constantly shutting them down, we will create that safe environment. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  I think I will have to talk with my students before we start discussing world religion. They will need to know before we start the end goal of our lesson and what is appropriate and inappropriate to say. Setting those guidelines early will help the students feel more prepared for the lesson. I would also try to bring all of the religions together at the end with a final research project. I want the students to see the similarities and differences in the religions. |
| ***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 biggest thing that I took from the guidelines was to not be afraid.  I think that teachers are a little afraid to touch the topic of religion in a public school.   It always seems to be a touchy subject, but it is necessary.  Basing the learning on instruction and putting it in an academic nature is extremely important.  However, even with doing that, there seems to be such a strong objection to kids being exposed to anything different than what they know/believe.  I think I would focus on the historical approach because it would just flow with the lesson and content.  The religion would be tied into content and it could all be taught together.  Another route would be to discuss different world religions as their holidays occur.  This would give the students a chance to work on the religions separate from the lessons. | ***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 would try to use videos and class discussions to help the students make the connections with world religion.  As the classes learn more about the different religions, I would like to see the students make Venn Diagrams to compare and contrast the different religions.  I think this would be a good way for them to see the similarities and differences, but to also review them as we move throughout the year. At the conclusion of the lessons on world religion, I would get the students in 5 groups.  Each student would research and present about one of the five religions. At the end of each presentation, the other groups would have time to prepare at least one question for the presenting group to answer or further research. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |

Annotated Bibliography:

**Buddhism-**

BBC. (2012, October 2). *The Buddha*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/history/history.shtml

This website provides a brief description of the practices and history of Buddhism. This website also has several links to further explain Buddhism.

*Buddhanet*. (2019). Retrieved from Buddha Dharma Education Association: www.buddhanet.net/

This website includes several links to artwork, additional files and lessons for a classroom. The artwork was very interesting and would be a great cultural tie in to the lesson.

Koja, K. (2003). *Buddha Boy.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

This book is about a teenage boy, Justin, that is trying to just make it through high school. When a new student arrives in school that practices Buddhism, Justin makes a connection with him. However, he soon realizes that he will have to choose sides. This book addresses many of the struggles that children see in school along with bullying, but it also pulls in the Buddhist teachings.

**Hinduism –**

Media, P. L. (2019). *Hinduism in Images*. Retrieved from PBS Learning Media: https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/hinduism-in-images/

This website provides approximately 70 images expressing Hinduism. These images can be used for class discussion and will expose the students to the diversity of the Hindu religion. This website will also show a glimpse at the cultural impact of Hinduism.

Dowling, M. (2018). *Hinduism*. Retrieved from mrdowling.com: https://www.mrdowling.com/612-hinduism.html

This is an excellent website that provides a basic introduction to Hinduism. There is also a brief video and a powerpoint that may be used in the classroom.

Mathur, B. (2014). *Amma, Tell Me About Hanuman!*

This is more of a children’s book than a young adult book. However, this book introduces the major Hindu festivals and figures. This book would be a good introduction to the lesson on Hinduism. There are pictures to show the class and enough information to start the lesson.

**Islam**-

PBS. (2019). *Promoting Understanding: Islam*. Retrieved from PBS Learning Media: https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/promoting-understanding-islam/

This website is great for an explanation of the Islamic religion. It discusses the culture and traditions of Islam. There are also personal stories which will help the students connect.

Mafi, T. (2018). *A Very Large of Expanse of Sea.* Ney York: Harper.

This book is about a Muslim teenager after September 11th. This book is from her perspective and includes the struggles and stereotypes that she is exposed to. The students will be able to connect with the teenage aspect but they will also grasp understanding about Islam.

Abdel-Fattah, R. (2008). *Where the Streets Had a Name.* Marion Lloyd Books.

This is another young adult novel. Hayaat is a thirteen year old that needs to get back to her ancestral home in Jerusalem to save her friend’s life. However, her family lives behind the wall that separates the West Bank. This story is about her journey.

**Christianity**:

Queen, E. (n.d.). *Christianity*. Retrieved from Scholastic: https://www.scholastic.com/teacher/articles/teaching-content/christianity/

This website has a very thorough description of the historical culture of Christianity. This would be a good resource for teachers to construct the lessons.

Stefon, M. (2019). *Christianity*. Retrieved from Encyclopedia Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity

This website also provides a lot of historical details about Christianity. There is also more information on the art provided by the Christian religion.

Asbridge, T. (2010). *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War of the Holy Land.* HarperCollins .

This book provides a history of the Crusades from 1095-1291. This book will give the historical aspect as well as connect the Christian and Islamic worlds.

**Judaism**-

Scholastic. (n.d.). *All About Judaism*. Retrieved from Scholastic: https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/all-about-judaism/

This website provides a type of “everything you need to know” about Judaism. It is an overview of the history of Judaism and its major beliefs.

Nayer. (1998). *Eight Nights of Hanukkah.*

This book gives an excellent introduction to Hanukkah, one of the major Jewish holidays. It includes details about crafts, games and other activities.

Leyson, L. (2015). *The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schnidler's List.*

This book touches on the subject of the Holocaust and how it affected the Jewish people. This is nonfiction book based on a young boy’s experience with the ghetto and how Oskar Schindler changed his life.