***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).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***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***  ***---------------------------------------------***  **Theme:** Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere  **Strand:** Geography  **Topic:** Human Systems  **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**   1. Farley, C. J. (1980). *Ms. Isabelle Cornell, herself*. United States: Atheneum Books. 2. MocomiKids (2012, October 18). *Gautam Buddha - his life and teachings | Mocomi kids* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uajX2cSTmlI> 3. The Buddhist game site. Retrieved July 13, 2016, from <http://www.dharmagames.org/>   **Hinduism**   1. Johari, H., & Weltevrede, P. (1998). *The birth of the Ganga*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions Bear and Company. 2. International, M. (2008). *The story of India - photo gallery*. Retrieved July 13, 2016, from <http://www.pbs.org/thestoryofindia/gallery/photos/4.html> (Click Explore the Topic and then the underlined word “Hindu” for more facts about Hinduism.) 3. PBS (2006, November 29). *NATURE “holy cow” | Hinduism’s sacred animal | PBS* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgEk4dPImNI>   **Islam**   1. Sharif, M. (2011). *Bestest. Ramadan. Ever*. United States: Llewellyn Worldwide. 2. Terms, P. I. (2016). *5 pillars of Islam*. Retrieved July 13, 2016, from https://prezi.com/u8l5a-\_ionpj/5-pillars-of-islam/ 3. D. Shek (2007, August 18). *HISTORY OF ISLAM 1 of 10* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csojgoZvlz8&list=PLC0ACD0B906D68DE1>   **Christianity**   1. Blume, J. (1985). *Are you there god? It’s me, Margaret*. United Kingdom: Chivers Large print (Chivers, Windsor, Paragon & C. 2. AllAboutReligion, 2016. (2002). *History of Christianity*. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <http://www.allaboutreligion.org/history-of-christianity.htm> 3. 12 major Christian holidays. (2013, September 8). Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <http://www.examiner.com/list/12-major-christian-holidays>   **Judaism**   1. Lowry, L. (1994). *Number the stars (paperback)*. Australia: HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) Pty. 2. Judaism origins, Judaism history, Judaism beliefs. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Judaism> 3. History.com (2009). Hanukkah - holidays. *history.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/hanukkah> | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **---------------------------------------------------------**  **Buddhism**  Buddhism comes from the word “budhi” which means awaken and came about around 2,500 years ago when the man known as the Buddha was “awakened” or enlightened. This religion is considered to be more of a philosophy of life and can be summarized with the following three “requirements” for living: to lead a moral life, to be mindful and aware of thoughts and actions, and to develop wisdom and understanding.  **Hinduism**  Hinduism comes from the word “Hindu” from the word “Sindhu” which was the ancient name for the River Indus. There is no single founder but it is the oldest practised religion in the world and started in the Indian subcontinent. Similarly to Buddhism it is considered to be more of a way of life than a religion. A few of the major themes are as follows: Dharma (code of ethical conduct), Samsāra (The continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth), Karma (action and subsequent reaction), Moksha (liberation from samsara), and the various Yogas (paths to attain Moksha, liberation or freedom).  **Islam**  Islam comes from the Arabic root which means “submission” because they believe in submitting to the will of God. Followers of Islam are referred to as Muslims. Muslims recognize some Jewish and Christian prophets and traditions but believe that Muhammad was the final and greatest prophet. This religion focuses more on practice than belief which at minimum are the five pillars of Islam: Shahadah (reciting the Muslim profession of faith), Salat (properly performing ritual prayers five teams per day), Zakat (paying an alms, or charity, tax to the poor/needy), Sawm (fasting during the month of Ramadan), and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).  **Christianity**  The word Christianity comes from the Greek word christianos from the word christos or Christ, meaning “anointed one.” This religion is the largest in the world and comes from the religion, Judaism. It is based on the belief of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the idea that the Bible is the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christians believe in one, single all-powerful god.  **Judaism**  Judaism is the religion that is most commonly associated with Jewish people. The ideas and beliefs laid out in the Hebrew bible are the basis for this religion. A large portion of the Jewish population resides in Israel. Judaism and its history began with the contract between God and Abraham, who is a main figure within this religion. Judaism is a monotheistic religion and is based on the belief that its people are the chosen ones who are to set examples of holiness and morality throughout the world. |
| ***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***  **Leading Discussion:**   1. “Articulating the distinction between religious studies and a devotional approach to religion at the outset of a lesson or unit will clarify educational goals and minimize confusion and anxiety.” (p. 11) 2. “Having students explore their assumptions is an essential first step in helping them look at religion clearly.” (pg. 12)   **Examples of BPs**   1. “The school strives for student *awareness* of religions, but does not press for students *acceptance* of any religion.” (pg. 7) 2. “The school sponsors *study* about religion, not the *practice* of religion.” (pg. 7)   **Present Multiple Perspectives:**   1. “Seeing examples of the way that religious beliefs, practices and imagery change over time and place helps students recognize that, from a religious studies perspective, there is no such thing as ‘a single meaning’ of a given tradition, practice, or belief system.” (pg. 13) 2. “Just as religion cannot be understood in isolation from its cultural manifestations, it is impossible to understand culture without considering its religious dimensions.” | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  **Leading Discussion:**   1. To get students thinking about their own assumptions about their religious beliefs and those of others first start by writing the name of each religion on the board. Have students copy each one down and quickly brainstorm words, phrases, or thoughts that come to mind when they hear or think about each particular religion. Have a discussion about their assumptions/biases and how those can affect their thoughts when learning new information about each religion.   **Examples of BPs**   1. Focusing on learning about the history of different religions can help teachers avoid pressing students to accept or practice a particular religion. This could be accomplished by dividing students into small groups and randomly assigning each group to a different religion to research the history, belief system, practices, etc. and then jigsaw their information with the rest of the class.   **Present Multiple Perspectives:**   1. The idea of miracles is something that is common in almost every religion. Taking this commonality and having students research the different stories or ideas of miracles within each religion they are learning about can help them see how one idea can have multiple perspectives but yet still be a similarity among different religious beliefs. |
| ***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?***  In my first few years of teaching I think that I will most likely follow the historical approach because it will be most familiar and comfortable to me as a social studies teacher. I will want to get the hang of leading discussions about the sensitive topics of religion before incorporating the other approaches. The historical approach will allow me to have a clear context and path for teaching and discussing the different world religions.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  When it comes to the competencies in Station 3 I understand that when teaching world religions I need to stick to the academics of the content, meaning I should be teaching and encouraging students to learn about the history, facts, beliefs, etc. of the religions not encouraging them to accept or practice any certain religion. I also understand that there will be students with many different religious backgrounds in my classroom so I will need to know this about my students by getting to know them and then being able to appropriately mediate any conflicts that may come up during discussions around religion in my classroom. I should do this by first setting up a comfortable, safe environment in which my students respect one another and have an appreciation for each individual and the differences that make up our classroom religiously, culturally, racially, etc. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***   1. In order to implement my understanding that my classroom needs to be a comfortable environment where my students are able to appreciate each of their classmates differences I would begin the year with activities that allow my students to get to know one another as well as for me to get to know them. One specific activity would involved my students creating a presentation about themselves (a powerpoint, scrapbook page, show-and-tell, essay, etc. of their choice). They would be asked to include any cultural customs, family traditions, and/or holidays they celebrate. This will allow students to learn about one another on a deeper level and create an appreciation for all of the differences in our classroom that makes it exciting and unique. 2. One specific way I would implement my preferred approach to teaching religion would be through KWL and “Cubes of Knowledge.” For example, when teaching about the history of Islam, as a class we would fill in the K and W portions of our charts. Then, I would use the History Channel series about the history of Islam and watch them throughout a few days: (D. Shek (2007, August 18). *HISTORY OF ISLAM 1 of 10* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csojgoZvlz8&list=PLC0ACD0B906D68DE1>). After we watched each video we would fill out the L portion of our charts. Once we completed the series I would give each students a 3D cube in which they would record 6 major important facts about the history of Islam. |
| ***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?***  After reading the AAR document I have a greater appreciation for and understanding of the importance of teaching about religion in my classroom. I learned that not only is there an illiteracy about religion around the world but that this problem causes so many of the prejudices as well and that teaching about religion in a constitutional manner can help stop the spread of illiteracy and create a greater respect for cultural differences among my students. I also think that before reading this article I felt like I would rather shy away from these topics because I wasn’t certain how to teach them in a politically correct and 100% respectful way. However, I feel much more comfortable after reading this article. I understand now that there are not only different approaches I can take when teaching about religion but also specific ways in which I can create a comfortable classroom that will allow for effective discussions between my students. I now know that if I focus more on teaching academic awareness and educate them on all different kinds of religions and avoid pushing or teaching about a certain religion over another, that students will learn and appreciate the content so much more. | ***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.***   1. At the beginning of each month we will discuss and mark special holidays and or festivals on our class calendar from each religion. We will then choose a few each month to research further and celebrate in some way either through class research and presentations, actual class parties with similar food/traditions/celebrations, or some other activity on or around the specific day that includes my students learning about the significance of the event and how it relates to the specific religion and its history. We would make sure to choose an even amount from each religion by the end of the year so that no, one religion was focused on more than others. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |