

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Time Line; Reading a Time Line; Distribution of World Religions; World Distribution and Size of Major World Religions; Belief, Fact, and Opinion	
Semitic Religions	12
Judaism	14
The Bible; Reading from the Bible: Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden; Abraham the Patriarch; Exodus: The Story of Moses and the Ten Commandments; Traditional Route of the Exodus; The Ten Commandments; My Own Commandments; Egyptian Gods and Goddesses; Passover (Pesach); The Proverbs; Basic Beliefs and Observances; Branches of Judaism; Jerusalem and the Western Wall; The Synagogue; Chanukah; Rites of Passage; The Holocaust; Important Jewish Objects and Symbols; The Jewish Calendar; The Jewish Population; Vocabulary; Quiz and Review	
Christianity	49
The Roman Empire; Palestine in the Time of Jesus; The Life of Jesus; Jesus and John the Baptist; Reading from the New Testament: The Temptation in the Wilderness; The Apostles and the Sermon on the Mount; Miracles; The Last Supper and the Crucifixion; The Stations of the Cross and the Via Dolorosa; Questions: The Last Supper and the Crucifixion; The Resurrection; Sayings of Jesus; Forgiveness; Branches of Christianity; Primary Christian Denominations; The Holy Trinity; The Spread of Christianity; Rites of Passage; Personal Rite of Passage; Lent, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week; Christmas; The Cross; Christian Symbols; Inside a Greek Orthodox Church; Inside an Episcopalian Church; Inside a Roman Catholic Church; The Lord's Prayer; Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle; Quiz and Review	
Islam	91
Origins of Islam: Abraham and the Ka'bah; The Life of Muhammad and the Birth of Islam; Muhammad's Last Years; The Life of Muhammad in Review; The <i>Koran</i> and the <i>Hadith</i> ; Reading from the <i>Koran</i> ; The Five Pillars of Islam; The First Pillar: Shahada; The Second Pillar: Salat; The Third Pillar: Zakat; The Fourth Pillar: Sawm; The Fifth Pillar: Hajj; The Caliphs and the Spread of Islam; The Third and Fourth Caliphs; The Shi'ah and Sunni Sects; More on the Spread of Islam; The Ottoman Empire; The Mosque; Rites of Passage; The Islamic Calendar; Symbols of Islam; Islam and Stereotypes; Islam in the World Today; Calligraphy; Wordsearch; Quiz and Review	
Indian Religions	127
Hinduism	129
Origins of Hinduism: The Indus Valley Civilization; The Indus Valley; Origins of Hinduism: The Aryan Invasion and the <i>Vedas</i> ; Origins of Hinduism: The Ascetics and the Upanishads; Reading from the Rig-Veda; Reading from <i>The Upanishads</i> ; Questions: The <i>Vedas</i> and <i>The Upanishads</i> ; The Hindu Trinity; Hindu Goddesses; The <i>Ramayana</i> ; Hindu Beliefs; Hindu Pilgrimages; Your Own Pilgrimage; The Sacred River Ganges; Varna (Mandir): The Hindu Caste System; Hindu Rites of Passage; Hindu Holidays; Hindu Floor Painting; Madir: The Hindu Temple; A Hindu Family Shrine; The Hindu Calendar; Hindu Symbols; Hindu Crossword Puzzle; Quiz and Review	

Table of Contents *(cont.)*

Buddhism	170
The Story of Buddha's Enlightenment; Places in the Life of Buddha; Buddha's Enlightenment: Comprehension; Buddha's Enlightenment: Critical Thinking; Buddha's Teachings; The Eightfold Path: Personal Response; Branches of Buddhism; Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism in Asia; The Spread of Buddhism; Buddhist Scriptures; Questions: The Branches and Spread of Buddhism; Tibetan Buddhism; Bodhisattvas; Zen Buddhism; Japanese Haiku; Meditation; Mandalas; Rites of Passage; Buddhist Temples and Shrines; Buddhist Symbols; Mantras and Mudras; Buddhist Festivals and Holidays; The Buddhist Calendar; Places of Pilgrimage; <i>The Cat Who Went to Heaven</i> ; Vocabulary; Quiz and Review	
Sikhism	219
Origins of Sikhism: The Life of Guru Nanak; The Punjab and Surrounding Countries; Origins of Sikhism: Comprehension; Origins of Sikhism: Critical Thinking; The Sikh Gurus; The Guru Granth: Sikh Holy Book; Reading from the Guru Granth; Questions: Reading from the Guru Granth; The Khalsa; Essay Responses: The Five K's and the Sikh Turban; Sikh Social Customs; Community Service; The Gurdwara; The Golden Temple; The Punjab; Rites of Passage; Women and Sikhism; Sikh Holy Places; Sikh Holidays and Festivals; The Sikh Calendar; Sikh Symbols; The Mool Mantra; Vocabulary Wordsearch; Quiz and Review	
Taoism	253
Confucius: China's Great Teacher; China in the Time of Confucius and Lao-Tzu; The Analects: Teachings of Confucius; Questions: The Life and Teachings of Confucius; Relationships; Lao-Tzu and the Origin of Taoism; Reading from the Tao Te Ching; Questions: Lao-Tzu and the Tao Te Ching; Taoist Magic: Chang Tao-Ling and the Elixir of Immortality; The Eight Immortals; Religious Customs; The Chinese Calendar and Zodiac; Taoist Symbols: The T'ai Chi; Quiz and Review	
Atheism and Agnosticism	269
Comparative and Reflective Activities	270
Religious Freedom and the First Amendment; Religious Conflict and Religious Tolerance; Interview; A Moral Universe?; My Own Symbol; Comparison: Rites of Passage; Biographies	
World Religions Final Exam	278
Bibliography	283
Answer Key	284

Introduction

Why Teach Religion?

If, for example, your students were asked what they know about Hinduism—an ancient faith claiming about 700 million followers—they would likely respond with an overwhelmingly small amount of information. Though they see religious images every day, they often know little about the religions themselves or the lives of the great spiritual leaders.

But why such ignorance? Why has the study of religion been neglected? In the early 1960's, the Supreme Court declared state-sponsored religious activities within the schools to be unconstitutional. However, the Court emphasized that learning about religion is essential. Despite the importance of religion in history and culture, most schools have kept a distance.

Fortunately, this distance is being bridged.

In a world which continuously grows more intimate and interdependent, there is a need for everyone to awaken to one another's spiritual heritage. To a great degree, the world has been shaped by religion. To teach history without religion is equivalent to teaching biology without reference to the human body. School boards across the nation are beginning to recognize this fact, advocating religious studies within the framework of history.

Besides the obvious profit of knowledge, religious studies foster tolerance. This is, perhaps, the most valuable lesson. After all, racism and stereotypes are born largely out of ignorance. How wonderful, then, to give students the opportunity to listen to a Buddhist speak or to visit a synagogue and ask questions of a rabbi. These kinds of direct contacts are invaluable.

Many people may wonder if students in the middle grades are too young to begin studying religion. Absolutely not! In fact, such a unit may provide spiritual nourishment missing in many students' lives, or it may strengthen the students' ties to their own faiths. Some may finally have the chance to wonder out loud about the meaning of life. They might return home and ask questions of their parents. Students are usually genuinely inspired by such a topic. Parents are likely to be appreciative, because in many cases, they will learn along with their children.

About the Curriculum

The ultimate goal of this curriculum is threefold: an appreciation of the history and culture of major world religions, an appreciation of the spiritual foundations of major world religions, and a personal exploration into matters of spirituality. Of course, these three translate into *tolerance*.

This book contains two main sections, beginning with the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and followed by the Indian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. These are supplemented by a chapter on Taoism. The final chapter is activity based, dedicated to comparison and reflection. At the end of the book, there is a bibliography.

Each chapter focuses on one religion and features each of the following areas:

- origin
- maps
- branches
- worship and prayer
- myths, stories
- symbols
- calendar
- quiz and review
- leader or prophet
- basic teachings, belief system
- sacred text (excerpt and background)
- rites of passage
- place of worship
- places of pilgrimage
- holidays, festivals