

Judaism and Christianity—Creatively

Grade Level: 6th grade Social Studies

Presented by: Amanda Blake, Academy Charter, Castle Rock, Co.

Length of Unit: 5 lessons (two weeks)

I. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this unit is to allow students the opportunity to work together in small groups while researching and presenting different aspects of Judaism and Christianity. This unit not only follows the core curriculum but encourages students to research, work together in small groups, write summaries, and have a clear and concise understanding of both Judaism and Christianity.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objective:

1. Students will understand the place of religion and religious ideas in history, and become aware of where those ideas originated.
2. Students will understand the ideas people profess affect their routines, celebrations, and behavior

B. Specific content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence* to be covered includes:

1. Experience with gathering data, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting accurately when taking notes.
2. Use of standard pronunciation when speaking to large groups.
3. Central ideas and moral teachings of Christianity including: The New Testament, The Sermon on the Mount and the two great commandments.
4. Central ideas and moral teachings of Judaism including: monotheism, the Torah, and the 10 Commandments.
5. Common ideas between Judaism and Christianity.
6. Geography of the Middle East.

C. Skills taught throughout the unit include:

1. Working with others, researching, and thinking creatively.
2. Map skills
3. Comparing and contrasting

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers:

1. The World Past and Present. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1991.
2. Gray, Randal and Hanlon, Dinah. Religions on File
3. Bowker, John. The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

B. For Students:

1. Review topics introduced in earlier grades of the *Core Knowledge Sequence* including: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Grade 1), Hinduism and Buddhism (Grade 2), Islamic beliefs and traditions (Grade 4).

IV. RESOURCES

1. Brown, Stephen. Christianity World Religions. New York: Brown Publishing, 1991.
2. Morrison, Martha. Judaism World Religions. New York: Brown Publishing, 1991.

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Mapping of the Middle East

A. Objectives:

1. Lesson Content: Geography of the Middle East
2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the place of religion and religious ideas in history, and become aware of where those ideas originated.
3. Skill Objective: map skills

B. Materials:

1. Appendix A (map of Middle East)
2. Appendix B (Worksheet)
3. Atlas

C. Background Notes

D. Key Vocabulary: refer to worksheet

E. Procedures/Activities:

1. Begin asking students what they know about the Middle East: Where it is located? What stories they you heard? Has anyone ever traveled to the Middle East? Was anyone born in the Middle East? This is a good introduction and gets students interested in the activity.
 2. Discuss how the Middle East is the birthplace of three major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Read about their beginning.
 3. Handout map and worksheet. Individually or in pairs have students find the areas and locate them on the map.
 4. Record responses to the questions on the worksheet.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment:* By answering the questions, students will be able to think about what they are doing rather than just putting words down on the paper. A follow-up activity may include a quiz or providing more information about each country. While discussing the rest of the unit make sure students continuously refer to maps during discussion and lectures.

Lesson Two: Central ideas of Judaism

A. Objectives:

1. Lesson Content: Central ideas of Judaism
2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the place of religion and religious ideas in history, and become aware of where those ideas originated.
3. Skill Objective: Researching current events and relating them to central beliefs of Judaism.

B. Materials:

1. Notes over central ideas of Judaism
2. Newspapers
3. Magazines
4. Internet access
5. Poster board

C. Background Notes

D. Key Vocabulary:

1. Torah: First five books of the Hebrew Bible.
2. Synagogue: Center of Jewish religious, educational, and social life.

3. Kosher fitting or proper. The meat of animals that chew their cud and have cloven hoofs. Only fish with gills and scales. Butchered according to special rituals.
 4. Rabbi: Religious leaders who learn the law and are responsible for studying, interpreting, and explaining the law to people.
 5. Yaweh
 6. Mount Sinai
 7. Covenant
 8. Abraham
- E. *Procedures/Activities:*
1. Review key vocabulary listed above and specific information from the Core Knowledge Sequence, Grade 6. You may also briefly review the items listed under Judaism from 1st Grade Core Knowledge.
 2. Throughout the week have students collect current event articles based on Jewish ideas and traditions. Students can get articles from the newspaper, magazines, and Internet.
 3. After collecting articles have students create a collage with articles and pictures that represent holidays, traditions, and Jewish beliefs. Have student's search for articles that deal with the topics discussed above.
 4. Present collage to class or paste around the room. Students will now have a basis for the central ideas of Judaism. They will also learn that Judaism is part of our everyday culture.
- F. *Evaluation/Assessment:* Evaluate student collages and participation in class discussion.

Lesson Three: Central ideas of Christianity

- A. *Objectives:*
1. Lesson Content: Central ideas of Christianity
 2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the place of religion and religious ideas in history, and become aware of where those ideas originated.
 3. Skill Objective: Researching current events and relating them to central beliefs of Judaism.
- B. *Materials:*
1. Notes over the central ideas of Christianity
 2. Markers/colored pencils
 3. Themes and ideas pertinent to the teachings of Christianity:
- C. *Background Notes*
- D. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Jesus of Nazareth
 2. Sermon on the Mount
 3. Parables
 4. The Last Supper
 5. Crucifixion
 6. Resurrection
- E. *Procedures/Activities:*
1. Review key vocabulary listed above and specific information from the Core Knowledge Sequence, Grade 6. You may also briefly review the items listed under Christianity from 1st Grade Core Knowledge.
 2. After discussing the central themes of Christianity have students become a crusader and create their own coat of arms based on the roots of Christianity.
 2. Each student needs to create a motto that represents a certain belief of Christians.

3. A symbol must be designed that represents a Christian tradition. I encourage students to think of something other than a cross.
4. Four different adjectives that describe a Christian ritual will be placed on the outer corners of the coat of arms.
5. Students may discuss their coat of arms with the class or they can be hung around the room.

F. *Evaluation/Assessment:*

1. Evaluate student's understanding of Christianity through their motto, symbol, and adjectives displayed on the coat of arms.

Lesson Four: Comparing Judaism and Christianity

A. *Objective:*

1. Lesson Content: Common ideas shared by Judaism and Christianity
2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the ideas people profess affect their routines, celebrations, and behavior.
3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. View to appreciate artistic images of Judaism and Christianity.
 - b. Make inferences about Judaism and Christianity beliefs based on artistic images
 - c. Compare and contrast beliefs about Judaism and Christianity

B. *Materials:*

1. Picture of a Jewish image such as a Rabbi and his family or children during the Passover meal.
2. An artistic representation of when Moses accuses his fellow Jews of breaking their covenant with God painted by Gustave Dore is a great discussion piece as well.
3. Picture of a Christian image such as a church or cathedral.
4. An image of Adoration of the Shepherds painted by Bartolome Esteban Murillo celebrates Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem would also be appropriate.
5. Overhead projector
6. Paper

C. *Background Notes*

D. *Key vocabulary:*

1. Perspective
2. Line
3. Shape
4. Color
5. Space
6. Texture
7. Contrast
8. Proportion.

E. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Put a picture representing a Christian tradition up on the overhead. Begin by having students simply make a list of what they see. Do the same with a Jewish tradition. You can use a simple picture of two different things or you can use a piece of art that represents a certain belief or image.
2. Discuss what some of the similarities and/or differences of the pictures. Let the student be an active participant in describing what s/he sees.
3. Have students give an interpretation of what they see by writing a description.

4. Create a Venn Diagram as a class describing the similarities and differences between Christianity and Judaism. Use information from the pictures shown on the overhead as well as information from lessons Two and Three.
- F. *Evaluation/Assessment:* After having written and discussed some of the similarities and differences between the two beliefs, students should have a good base for their presentations. They will also have a better understanding of what art appreciation is and how it can be used to bring out emotions and feelings.

Lesson Five: Group Presentations

A. *Objective:*

1. Lesson Content: Symbols and Traditions of Judaism and Christianity
2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the ideas people profess affect their routines, celebrations, and behavior.
3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Researching and organizing information
 - b. Preparing and giving an oral presentation

B. *Materials:*

1. Books about Judaism and Christianity from your school and local library
2. Research materials including Encyclopedias and *National Geographic*.
3. Construction paper and other art supplies.
4. Newspapers/Magazines
5. Appendices C and D

C. *Background Notes*

D. *Key Vocabulary:*

1. Christianity
2. Jesus
3. Christ
4. New Testament
5. Sermon on the Mount: (Matthew 6:26).
6. Judaism
7. Torah
8. Monotheism
9. Ten Commandments

E. *Procedures/Activities:*

1. Divide students into groups of six. Introduce each topic listed below and either allow them to choose which presentation they would like, or assign groups for them.
2. Handout Appendix C so students focus and know exactly what is expected during the presentation.
 - a. Topic number one: Research the Jewish tradition of Passover. Some specific questions to ask include: Why is Passover called the festival of freedom? Why do Jewish people eat matzo instead of bread? How many days does Passover last? What is the significance of this? What happens during the Seder meal? What foods are eaten during this time and why? What is the message Passover reminds the Jewish people of?
 - b. Topic number two: Research the Jewish festivals. Sukkot—festival of tabernacles; Shemini Atzeret—festival of rejoicing in the Torah; Rosh Hashanah—The Jewish New Year; and Hanukkah—festival of lights. The assignment is to give information on each Jewish festival including: Why is each festival celebrated?

- What is the significance of each festival? What time of year is the festival celebrated? Why do the Jewish think each particular festival is important?
- c. Topic number three: Research important Jewish objects and symbols including: Ner Tamid, Menorah candlestick, The Holy Ark, Torah Scrolls with Yad Pointer, Shofar, Kiddush wine cup, and the Challah cover for bread. Why are these objects important to the Jewish people? What do they look like and when are they used? What objects of clothing do the Jewish people wear?
 - d. Topic number four: Research the Origins of Judaism: Where did Judaism begin? Who were the important leaders in the beginning? What are the sacred scriptures of the Jewish people? What is the Torah and what does it signify?
 - e. Topic number five: Research some aspects of Christianity: What are some of the specific beliefs of Christians? How do they differ from that of the Jewish beliefs? What are some of the main events in Jesus' life? Give some examples of the teachings of Jesus.
 - f. Topic number six: Research some important Christian objects and symbols (such as the Cross, fish, etc.): Discuss the evolution of the church building. How were churches designed and why? Why are icons important to the Orthodox Church? Discuss the Orthodox Church and its significance to Christianity.
3. Each group will have the opportunity to become the teacher. After researching the subject and finding out the information, the group will creatively share their research with the class.
 - a. The goal is to share the information in a creative manner. Students can devise a game, use the overhead projector, perform a skit, sing a song, show a movie, or come up with any idea they think will be most beneficial to the students in the class.
 - b. Suggestions and requirements for students:
 - (1) Visual materials are most helpful when teaching.
 - (2) Every group member must be a part of the presentation.
 - (3) Presentations should last 7-10 minutes.
 - (4) Each student needs to work together with members of the group.
 - (5) A one-page summary of the research should be handed in at the time of the presentation.
 4. Handout Appendix D so students have a guideline for gathering research. This will make it easier for organizing and writing the summary.
 5. Allow several days for research and practicing presentations.
 6. Invite other students and parents to come and watch presentations.
- F. *Evaluation/Assessment*: See Appendix C for grading worksheet. Watching and grading presentations as well as reading summaries will provide a thorough assessment for a clear understanding of Judaism and Christianity.

VI. CULMINATING/FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

A. *Objective*:

1. Lesson Content: Major World Religions
2. Concept Objective: Students will understand the ideas people profess affect their routines, celebrations, and behavior.
3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Compare and contrast major world religions
 - b. Organize information in chart form

B. *Materials:*

1. Chart paper
2. Markers
3. Books from your local library about other world religions

C. *Background Notes*

D. *Key Vocabulary:*

1. Hinduism
2. Reincarnation
3. Vedas
4. Buddha
5. Buddhism
6. Egyptians
7. Ra
8. Islam
9. Koran
10. Kaaba

E. *Procedures/Activities:*

1. After having a discussion over the different world religions using vocabulary listed above, have students get into pairs and make a chart comparing and contrasting all the different religions. For example:

Religion	Christianity	Judaism	Islam	Hindu	Buddhism	Ancient Egyptian
Leader						
Name for God						
Monotheistic?						
Holy Book						
Holy Building						
Beliefs						
Celebrations						

2. Draw pictures and/or symbols to represent each religion and do a quick presentation to the rest of the class.

F. *Evaluation/Assessment:* Looking at the differences and similarities between each religion prepares each student for an in depth look at Judaism and Christianity. This can also lead to a discussion about the sensitivity of others; being respectful, courteous, and open minded.

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

See attached Appendices B, C, D

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The World Past and Present. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1991.

Gray, Randal and Hanlon, Dinah. Religions on File

Bowker, John. The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Morrison, Martha. Judaism World Religions. New York: Brown Publishing, 1991.

Appendix B
Mapping of the Middle East Worksheet

Label the following bodies of water and color blue:

Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
Arabian Sea
Caspian Sea
Tigris River
Euphrates River

Label the following Middle Eastern Countries:

Iran
Iraq
Saudi Arabia
Yemen
Oman
Syria
Jordan
Cyprus
Lebanon
Israel
Turkey
Armenia
Georgia
Azerbaijan

Label the following landforms:

Atlas and Taurus Mountains
Anatolian and Arabian Peninsulas
Sahara and Arabian Deserts

Answer the following questions after having labeled and colored your map.

1. List the four Middle Eastern nations bordering the Mediterranean
2. What is the largest Middle Eastern nation?
3. What sea is north of Iran?
4. What sea is north of Turkey?
5. Name the six countries that surround the Persian Gulf:

Appendix C
Group Presentation Grading Sheet

Topic:

Group Members:

Time:

Period:

1. Did each member of the group participate?
2. Was the topic presented in a creative manner?
3. Were the specific questions asked presented on? Did the group stay on the topic?
4. Were visual materials used?
5. Was the presentation thorough? Did it last between 7-10 minutes?
6. Was a summary handed in at the time of the presentation?

Appendix D
Gathering Research

Topic:

Paraphrased Information

Title of book:

Page numbers: