THE STORY OF
God

WITH
MORGAN FREEMAN

natgeotv.com/StoryOfGod
Curriculum Guide for the Film Series

The Story of God,
With Morgan Freeman

Journeys in Film
www.journeynsinfilm.org
Educating for Global Understanding
www.journeysinfilm.org

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Eileen Mattingly, Director of Education/Curriculum Content Specialist
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Roger B. Hirschland, Executive Editor
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Michael H. Levine

Authors of this curriculum guide
Ryan Chamberlain
Bengt Johnson
Mary Anne Kovacs
Marty Kushner
Molly S. Lord-Garrettson

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Professor Richard A. Schweder
Tony Shalhoub
Mary Steenburgen
Walter Teller
Loung Ung
Sonia Weitz (In Memoriam)
Elizabeth Clark Zoia

Journeys in Film
50 Sandia Lane
Placitas, NM 87043
505.867.4666
www.journeysinfilm.org

National Geographic Channel
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
http://channel.nationalgeographic.com

Journeys in Film: The Story of God
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About Journeys in Film

Founded in 2003, Journeys in Film operates on the belief that teaching with film has the power to prepare students to live and work more successfully in the 21st century as informed and globally competent citizens. Its core mission is to advance global understanding among youth through the combination of age-appropriate films from around the world, interdisciplinary classroom materials, and professional development offerings for teachers. This comprehensive curriculum model promotes widespread use of film as a window to the world to help students to mitigate existing attitudes of cultural bias, cultivate empathy, develop a richer understanding of global issues, and prepare for effective participation in an increasingly interdependent world. Our standards-based lesson plans support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students across the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

Selected films act as springboards for lesson plans in subjects ranging from math, science, language arts, and social studies to other topics that have become critical for students, including environmental sustainability, poverty and hunger, global health, diversity, and immigration. Prominent educators on our team consult with filmmakers and cultural specialists in the development of curriculum guides, each one dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the culture and issues depicted in a specific film. The guides merge effectively into teachers’ existing lesson plans and mandated curricular requirements, providing teachers with an innovative way to fulfill their school districts’ standards-based goals.

Why use this program?

To be prepared to participate in tomorrow’s global arena, students need to gain an understanding of the world beyond their own borders. Journeys in Film offers innovative and engaging tools to explore other cultures and social issues, beyond the often negative images seen in print, television, and film media.

For today’s media-centric youth, film is an appropriate and effective teaching tool. Journeys in Film has carefully selected quality films that tell the stories of young people living in locations that may otherwise never be experienced by your students. Students travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in Children of Heaven, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in The Cup, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in The Way Home, or watch the ways modernity challenges Maori traditions in New Zealand in Whale Rider.
In addition to our ongoing development of teaching guides for culturally sensitive foreign films, *Journeys in Film* brings outstanding documentary films to the classroom. Working in partnership with the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California, *Journeys in Film* has identified exceptional narrative and documentary films that teach about a broad range of social issues in real-life settings such as famine-stricken and war-torn Somalia, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a World War II concentration camp near Prague. *Journeys in Film* curriculum guides help teachers integrate these films into their classrooms, examining complex issues, encouraging students to be active rather than passive viewers, and maximizing the power of film to enhance critical thinking skills and to meet the Common Core standards.

*Journeys in Film* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
A Letter From Liam Neeson

Working in films such as *Michael Collins* and *Schindler’s List*, I’ve seen the power of film not only to entertain, but also to change the way audiences see themselves and the world. When I first met Joanne Ashe, herself the daughter of Holocaust survivors, she explained to me her vision for a new educational program called *Journeys in Film: Educating for Global Understanding*. I grasped immediately how such a program could transform the use of film in the classroom from a passive viewing activity to an active, integral part of learning.

I have served as the national spokesperson for *Journeys in Film* since its inception because I absolutely believe in the effectiveness of film as an educational tool that can teach our young people to value and respect cultural diversity and to see themselves as individuals who can make a difference. *Journeys in Film* uses interdisciplinary, standards-aligned lesson plans that can support and enrich classroom programs in English, social studies, math, science, and the arts. Using films as a teaching tool is invaluable, and *Journeys in Film* has succeeded in creating outstanding film-based curricula integrated into core academic subjects.

By using carefully selected foreign films that depict life in other countries and cultures around the globe, combined with interdisciplinary curricula to transform entertainment media into educational media, we can use the classroom to bring the world to every student. Our foreign film program dispels myths and misconceptions, enabling students to overcome biases; it connects the future leaders of the world with each other. As we provide teachers with lessons aligned to Common Core standards, we are also laying a foundation for understanding, acceptance, trust, and peace.

Please share my vision of a more harmonious world where cross-cultural understanding and the ability to converse about complex issues are keys to a healthy present and a peaceful future. Whether you are a student, an educator, a filmmaker, or a financial supporter, I encourage you to participate in the *Journeys in Film* program.

Please join this vital journey for our kids’ future. They are counting on us. *Journeys in Film* gets them ready for the world.

Sincerely,

[National Spokesperson
Journeys in Film]
A Letter From Morgan Freeman and Lori McCreary

Dear All,

Who is God? Where did we come from? Why does evil happen? Are miracles real? What happens when we die? These questions can be puzzling, terrifying, even inspirational. We’ve asked ourselves these questions many times, and most likely, you have, too. The answers are often as different as you and I, and vary depending on where you live, how you were raised, and what you believe.

That’s why we set out on this global journey—to explore different cultures and religions, on the ultimate quest to uncover the meaning of life, the question of God, and everything in between. We are proud to bring you this story and share our findings on how faith has shaped our lives and influenced the evolution of our society.

Religion has changed throughout the course of civilization, dividing as much as inspiring. But even in our current geopolitical landscape, our experiences in nearly 20 cities—in seven different countries—shed a brilliant light on the remarkable and unmistakable similarities among different faiths, even those that historically have been at odds or seem to stand in stark contrast to one another.

Throughout this personal journey, we found many answers. In some places, we found only more questions. But through it all, the one constant we discovered—the one irrefutable fact—is that we’re all looking to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

We went to some of mankind’s greatest religious sites. We traveled with archaeologists, immersed ourselves in religious experiences and rituals all around the world, and even became test subjects in scientific labs, where the frontiers of neuroscience are intersecting with the traditional domain of religion. We’ve sung the call to prayer at a mosque in Cairo, taken meditation lessons from the Buddhist leader of the oldest line of reincarnating lamas, discussed Galileo with the head of the Papal Academy of Sciences, and explored the first instructions for the afterlife rendered in hieroglyphs inside the pyramids of Egypt.

In the end, what surprised us most was finding how personal those answers were for each and every one of us. There is no wrong answer when it comes to understanding God or what you believe. We hope The Story of God and this curriculum guide will spark new interfaith conversations and begin a wider dialogue about the ideas and values that we all share—rather than focusing on those we do not.

It is our pleasure and great joy to bring you this special series, and our hope that you’ll find our journey as enlightening and inspirational as we did.

Blessings to you,

Morgan Freeman and Lori McCreary
Executive Producers
Introducing *The Story of God, With Morgan Freeman*

Morgan Freeman, the actor who played God in the 2003 film *Bruce Almighty*, has undertaken a six-part series on world religions called *The Story of God*. The 78-year-old actor traveled almost 100,000 miles to trace the origins of the great world religions. He visited sacred sites—a Maya temple in Guatemala, the ghats of Varanasi in India, Vatican City in Rome, the pyramids of Egypt, and more. He interviewed monks and monsignors, imams and rabbis, scientists and scholars. The result is a survey of themes that these religions share. They all ask the same great questions, but may answer those great questions in a variety of ways.

- How did we get here? Who or what created the universe? What do the creation stories of different religions have in common? What does the scientific theory of the Big Bang tell us?

- Is there a God? How has the idea of one or more supreme beings evolved over time? Is there any evidence in our brains that we are predisposed to believe in God?

- What is evil? Where does it come from? How is the need to control evil related to the rise of civilizations?

- Can miracles be real? How can we understand the existence of “impossible” happenings?

- How will the world end? Will there be a fiery apocalypse? What will bring about the end of the world as we know it?

- What happens after we die? How has belief in the afterlife evolved?

Humans have speculated about these questions for eons. Now Morgan Freeman takes the viewer with him as he attempts to learn more about how humans have tried to answer these questions across continents and millennia.

This curriculum guide has been prepared for use in secondary classrooms to help students understand more about the history and belief systems of the five major living religions the viewer encounters in the series: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
For Revelations Entertainment

**Host:** Morgan Freeman

**Executive Producers:** James Younger, Lori McCreary, Morgan Freeman

**Supervising Producer:** Scott Tiffany

**Executive in Charge of Production:** Erika Schroeder

**Lead Editor:** David Isser

**Editors:** David LaMattina, Lance Larson, J.D. Sievertson

**Producer:** Frank Kosa

**Directors of Photography:** Tim Metzger, Wes Dorman

**Music:** Lorne Balfe

For National Geographic Channel

**President of Original Programming & Production:** Tim Pastore

**Vice-President of Production and Development:** Kevin Tao Mohs

**Executive Producer:** Mike Miller

**Senior Vice-President of Communications and Talent Relations Worldwide:** Chris Albert

**Marketing and Communications:** Tracy Smith

**Director of Communications for Miniseries and Event Programming:** Stephanie Montgomery
Notes to the Teacher

Teaching about world religions makes some teachers uncomfortable, but it is an important element of social studies classes such as world history, Advanced Placement World History, and Advanced Placement Human Geography. Moreover, it is an important part of any citizen’s education. As the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) said in a position paper:

Public schools can and should do more to take religion seriously in a world where religion—for better and for worse—plays a critical role in shaping events at home and abroad.

The Supreme Court concurred. In *Abington v. Schempp* more than a half century ago, Associate Justice Tom Clark wrote in his opinion:

> [I]t might well be said that one’s education is not complete without a study of comparative religions or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization.

The root cause of teacher discomfort is in many cases a misunderstanding of the First Amendment to the Constitution on the part of teachers and administrators. To clarify the issue, the First Amendment Center has published “A Teacher’s Guide to Religion in the Public Schools,” a clear and concise set of guidelines for handling this subject appropriately that was developed by a consortium of diverse religious groups. A copy of this guide can be downloaded from [http://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/resources/publications/](http://www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/resources/publications/). (A fuller treatment of the subject, *Finding Common Ground* by Charles C. Haynes, can be downloaded at the same site.) The NCSS has summarized the main principles in “A Teacher’s Guide” as follows:

- The school’s approach to religion is *academic, not devotional*.
- The school strives for student *awareness* of religions, but does not press for student acceptance of any religion.
- The school sponsors study about religion, not the *practice* of religion.
- The school may expose students to a diversity of religious views, but may not *impose* any particular view.
- The school educates about all religions; it does not *promote or denigrate* any religion.
- The school may inform the student about religious beliefs, but should not seek to *conform* him or her to any particular belief.

This curriculum guide from *Journeys in Film* contains five lessons, one on each of the five largest living world religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each lesson extends over several days and incorporates information about the history of the religion, its major beliefs, its founder if one is identifiable, and more. Each lesson is free-standing and can be incorporated into your curriculum where appropriate. Each uses clips from episodes of the series *The Story of God, With Morgan Freeman* to illustrate important points. Each conforms to the guidelines outlined above and each is aligned with Common Core standards.

[^1]: [http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/study_about_religions](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/study_about_religions)
Hinduism

Enduring Understandings

• Hinduism, the third-largest religion in the world, has many gods and a variety of worship practices.

• Hindus believe that life is cyclical, that one is reborn (reincarnated) in a series of lives until one reaches perfection and is freed from the cycle.

• The great Hindu epic, the Ramayana, shows values important to Hindus, including honor and loyalty.

• Classical Hindu dance is considered sacred and is performed as an act of worship.

Essential Questions

• Who are the main Hindu gods and how are they worshiped?

• What is reincarnation and how does belief in reincarnation affect the lives of Hindus?

• What is the Ramayana and why is it important?

• What is the role of dance in Hindu culture?

Notes to the Teacher

Hinduism is the oldest active religion in the world. It differs greatly from Judeo-Christian theology in that it does not have a particular founder or systematic organization to its creation or worship. As Morgan Freeman says in The Story of God, “The Hindu philosophy is not to dwell on the mystery of our creation, but simply to give thanks that we are here.” There’s a common question surrounding the religion: The Hindu gods created the universe, but who created the Hindu gods?

From as early as 1500 BCE, the tenets of Hinduism have been transmitted through ancient hymns known as the Vedas. Written in the ancient language of Sanskrit, these early texts exist in four main collections: Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharva-Veda.

The Hindu relationship to the spirit world is complicated. At its core, Hinduism revolves around three main gods or deities: Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu. These and other minor gods are worshiped in temples. Worshiping is not done by congregations, but rather individually or in small groups. Hindus express their faith through many festivals throughout the year. One of the more popular Hindu celebrations is known as Diwali, or the Festival of Lights, which celebrates the victory of knowledge over ignorance.

The Ganges River plays a central role in Hindu religion. Devotees of Hinduism believe that the Ganges River has mystical qualities. They often bathe in it, hoping that it will purify the soul and wash away their sins. In Hinduism, the Ganges is personified earliest as the river goddess Ganga. The Creator god Brahma sent Ganga flowing down from the heavens. But the god Shiva feared that Ganga would drown the Earth so he caught her in his hair. When Shiva parted a lock of his hair, the Ganges River was created.
This introductory lesson includes multiple activities to engage students with the history and culture of Hinduism. The lesson begins simply, with a K-W-L (Know, Want to Know, Learned) chart on **Handout 1** asking students to think about what they know and want to know about Hinduism. If you are not familiar with this tool, see the National Education Association’s explanation at [http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html](http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html).

After brainstorming, students will work in a jigsaw group exercise in order to produce a broader understanding of four important aspects of Hinduism: the Hindu Trinity, the Vedas, Hindu festivals, and Hindu worship. **Handout 2** is based on a Library of Congress country study, so it presents a good opportunity for reading informational text and discerning main ideas, a Common Core requirement. You will need full copies of the handout for each student. Even though students will become “experts” on one topic in class in order to teach others, they will need to read all four sections. As students work, stay especially available to those working on the second topic, which is more abstract and difficult; you may wish to assign your best readers to that page.

Part 3 of the lesson deals further with the idea of reincarnation introduced in the second reading and with the practice of cremation. Students will watch two clips from the series *The Story of God*, in which Morgan Freeman learns about the Ganges River, the concept of reincarnation, and the funeral rites of Hindus. They will define reincarnation and talk about some of the related ideas, including *samsara* (the repeated cycle of birth, life, and death) and *moksha* (the release from *samsara* to become one with the Divine.

The fourth activity deals with the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*. **Handout 3** is a simple retelling of the main story of the *Ramayana*, but the actual epic is much more complex, with many additional stories about the main characters. Rama is generally believed to have been a real historical tribal hero who was later deified and celebrated in the Sanskrit epic attributed to the poet Valmiki. Rama was considered an avatar or human form of the god Vishnu, and representations of him in art look similar to pictures of Vishnu. The epic is long, with about 24,000 verses arranged into seven books. There are many versions of the *Ramayana*, and most countries in Southeast Asia have a version of it. For more information about this epic, a good place to start is [https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions/texts/Ramaya.html](https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions/texts/Ramaya.html).

After learning about the *Ramayana*, students are introduced to an art form; sacred Hindu dance. Before the class, prepare a slide show of images of Indian dance based on the *Ramayana* by searching Google Images with the search terms “Hindu – dance – Ramayana.” You will need a world map or map of Asia for this lesson. Also, locate several examples of Balinese dance on YouTube. The music in the background is provided by a traditional gamelan, or gong, orchestra. You should also include the Kecak dance (pronounced KET-jack) in which men imitate the monkeys that composed Hanuman’s army. (Dances based on the *Ramayana* may also be found in the Bharatanatyam and Kathak dance style.) Hindu classical dance, which is always religious, has many styles; the dances of the island of Bali, in Indonesia, demonstrate the far reach of Hindu culture. Note that while Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world, Bali has remained Hindu and preserved ancient Hindu rituals, including dance and cremation.
Finally, in a wrap-up exercise, students come back to their original K-W-L charts and fill in the last column with what they have learned.

**Suggested Online Resources**

- The Asia Society, “Religions of South Asia,” at [http://asiasociety.org/religions-south-asia](http://asiasociety.org/religions-south-asia)
- National Geographic blogs on topics in Hinduism at [http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/tag/hinduism/](http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/tag/hinduism/)
Duration of the Lesson

Two to four class periods

Assessment

Jigsaw group work
K-W-L charts
Class discussion
Written answer to questions on the Ramayana on Handout 3

Materials

Copies of Handout 1: K-W-L Chart of Hinduism
Copies of Handout 2: Basic Beliefs of Hinduism
Copies of Handout 3: The Ramayana
Computer and projector

Procedure

Part 1: Brainstorming Prior Knowledge

1. Tell students that they will be studying world religions in conjunction with watching segments from Morgan Freeman’s film series The Story of God (or the full series if you prefer). Explain that the oldest religion mentioned in the series is Hinduism.

2. Draw a K-W-L chart on the board and distribute Handout 1. As a group, have students brainstorm words or phrases that they associate with Hinduism. Record these in the K section of the K-W-L chart and have them do the same on their charts. Ask them to explain these associations and tell where they came from. Next, have them list things that they want to know about Hinduism in the W section. Prompt students to think about sacred texts, history, celebrations, and culture; it may help to ask them to think about topics they would include for any religion they are familiar with.

3. When the K and W columns of the chart are complete, have each of the students share two things from the second column of their K-W-L chart with the class. Fill in the second column of the chart on the board as they do this. Collect the handouts and save them to revisit later in the unit.
Lesson 1
(HINDUISM)

Part 2: Basic Beliefs of Hinduism

1. Divide students into groups of four and distribute Handout 2. This is their “home” group for the jigsaw exercise. Each student in the group is responsible for one of the four main aspects of Hinduism: the Hindu Trinity, the Vedas, Hindu festivals, and Hindu Worship. These may be assigned or students may choose, but each element must be represented by a student who will be the “expert” on that element in the group.

2. Have students move into “expert” sections (one group for each topic) and read the assigned text. After they have finished reading, the expert sections should discuss what they have read and decide what the main points of the reading are. They should then take notes and write a summary for their home groups, highlighting key points.

3. Bring students back to their home groups and have each of the students present the information on the aspect of Hindu religion assigned to them. Tell students to take notes on the presentations. Then tell them to read through and annotate the readings on the other aspects of Hinduism from Handout 2 for homework. Be available to answer questions; the readings are challenging and students may need help with unfamiliar concepts.

4. Show the clip from the episode “Who Is God?” in The Story of God, in which Morgan Freeman learns about the multiplicity of Hindu gods. Tell students that there are millions of deities, in fact; there is a shrine at every corner. Hindu gods may take the form of natural forces, animals, and supernatural beings. Some questions for discussion:

• How do Hindus decide which gods to honor? (Often it is a family deity that is passed on through generations. Or if a person has a particular problem, he or she may seek a deity’s help and promise to worship that deity in return.)

• How do Hindus honor the gods? (Prayers; chanting; the offering of food, water, flowers, and other articles)

• What is the purpose of the puja ceremony that Morgan witnesses? (To honor the Supreme Mother Goddess, Lalitha)

• What does Morgan Freeman mean when he says Hindu belief is like a “spiritual fingerprint,” unique to each person? (Each person may choose which gods to honor.)

Part 3: Reincarnation and Cremation

1. Ask students to define reincarnation. (They will probably say being born over and over.)

2. Show the following clips from The Story of God and ask them to pay particular attention to information about reincarnation and cremation. Show the second clip twice, if necessary.

• The episode “Creation,” when Morgan Freeman visits Varanasi and learns about the Ganges River

• The episode “Beyond Death,” when he learns about reincarnation
3. Ask students to write down in their notebooks a more thorough definition of reincarnation, based on the video clips; then call on a few students to read their definitions.

4. Tell students that both Hindus and Buddhists believe that life is cyclical; the repetition of birth, life, and death is called samsara. The way you live in this life will determine how you will be reborn in the next life (karma).

5. Ask students what the goal of reincarnation is. (To become virtuous so that one can end the cycle of rebirths.) What is meant by the term moksha? (The union of the individual human soul with the Divine. Point out that this is similar to the idea of nirvana in Buddhism.) Why is cremation at the Marnikanika ghat (cremation place) in Varanasi considered so important? (Cremation at this very holy site releases the soul from the cycle of rebirths and the soul attains moksha.)

Part 4: The Ramayana

1. Write the word “epic” on the board and explain to students that an epic is a long narrative poem that tells a story, usually about a great national hero. Give examples, such as The Iliad and The Odyssey (Greek), The Aeneid (Roman), Beowulf (Anglo-Saxon), and even the modern American epic about the Civil War, John Brown’s Body. Tell them that in India there is a Hindu epic, the Ramayana, written in Sanskrit and attributed to the poet Valmiki, a sort of Indian Homer. Explain that Sanskrit is one of the oldest languages and is the language of Hindu sacred texts.

2. Ask students what the word “avatar” means. (Most will suggest an online persona, an icon that represents a player in a video game.) Point out that the avatar lets the player enter the world of the video game. The word “avatar” comes from Sanskrit and means the descent of a god into a physical or human form. Review the three main gods from the previous part of the lesson and explain that the gods have avatars. Rama is the seventh avatar of Vishnu.

3. Distribute Handout 3: The Ramayana and tell students that Ramayana simply means “Rama’s journey.” Read aloud or have them read silently the story. Then have small groups discuss their answers to the questions that follow the story.

Suggested answers:

1. The responsibilities of a prince:
   - He must show courage and strength (Rama battles and defeats demons).
   - He must put loyalty to his family above his own ambition (Rama goes into exile without resisting; Bharata refuses to take the throne his mother has inveigled to get for him).

The role of women:
   - A virtuous and beautiful woman is a prize to be won (Rama wins Sita’s hand with his prowess with the bow).
   - A wife should be unfailingly loyal to her husband. (Sita loves her husband and voluntarily follows him into exile; she puts his honor above even her own safety.)
   - A husband must always see that his wife is safe. (Rama leaves Lakshmana to guard Sita when he leaves; he rescues her from Ravana.)
The existence of evil:

- Sometimes evil exists in ordinary humans, sometimes in demons with magical powers. (Bharata’s mother tries to cheat Rama of his inheritance; Rama battles demons at the beginning of the story and then kills Ravana at the end.)

- Evil can be defeated by honor and courage. (Bharata saves the throne for his brother; Rama wins his battles against the demons.)

The importance of friendship:

- Friendship can and should be absolute. (Lakshmana goes into exile with Rama; Hanuman risks his life to help Rama.)

2. It shows that reputation is very important, especially for a prince. He must have a sense of honor and act to defend it.

4. Explain to students that the real Ramayana is much more complex than the summary on the handout. Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, and Hanuman have many more adventures. Encourage them to read more of the epic or to see one of the live action or animated films based on the Ramayana from India.

Part 5: Hindu Dance

1. Show students a world map and locate Indonesia. Tell them that, although Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world, the population on one small island—Bali—has retained belief in Hinduism, and point out the island of Bali (due south of the southernmost tip of Borneo). Tell them that Bali is well known for its traditional dances, several of which are based on the Ramayana.

2. Show students the video of the Ramayana ballet and ask them to record their impressions of it as they watch. (They will probably have comments about the costumes, the hand gestures, and the music.) Explain that these are all traditional. Give students 10–15 minutes to write about their observations in list form. Explain that throughout the Hindu world, classical dance is sacred and is considered an offering to the gods.

3. Show your slides of other scenes from other Hindu classical dances. Give students the opportunity to discuss and to add to their lists of observations.

4. Show them the video of the Kecak dance, without additional explanation. Ask if anyone can guess what the “chak” sound is supposed to be. (Imitation of the sound of monkeys.) Tell students that in Bali the monkey is considered a sacred animal, in part because of the heroism and loyalty of Hanuman, and that a preserve with three temples is located there. Visitors can feed the monkeys, and the monkeys may even steal food from a visitor’s pocket.
Conclusion

Redistribute the K-W-L charts from the beginning of the unit (Handout 1). Prompt students to reflect on what they have learned about the history and culture of Hinduism, writing their responses in the L column of the K-W-L. Then have students discuss their entries with the entire class.
Follow your teacher’s directions on filling in sections of this chart.

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<th>What do you Want to know?</th>
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It is often said that the Hindu religion has three gods at its head: Brahma, the creator of the universe; Vishnu, the preserver of life; and Shiva, the destroyer of ignorance.

Brahma is a representation of the impersonal Brahman [the ultimate reality underlying all things] in a human form, usually with four faces facing the cardinal directions and four arms. In reality, Brahma receives little devotion from worshipers, who may mention him in passing while giving their attention to the other main gods. There are few temples in India dedicated to him; instead, his image may stand in niches on the walls of temples built for other deities. Religious stories usually place Brahma as an intermediate authority who cannot handle a problem and passes it on to either Vishnu or Shiva. The concept of the trinity (trimurti), expressed in beautiful art works or invoked even by believers, is in practice a philosophical construct that unites all deistic traditions within Hinduism into one overarching symbol.

As one of the most important gods in the Hindu pantheon, Vishnu is surrounded by a number of extremely popular and well-known stories and is the focus of a number of sects devoted entirely to his worship. Vishnu contains a number of personalities, often represented as 10 major descents (avatars) in which the god has taken on physical forms in order to save earthly creatures from destruction. In one story, the Earth was drowning in a huge flood, so to save it Vishnu took on the body of a giant turtle and lifted the Earth out of the waters on his back. A tale found in the Vedas describes a demon who could not be conquered. Responding to the pleas of the gods, Vishnu appeared before the demon as a dwarf. The demon, in a classic instance of pride, underestimated this dwarf and granted him as much of the world as he could tread in three steps. Vishnu then assumed his universal form and in three strides spanned the entire universe and beyond, crushing the demon in the process. The incarnation of Vishnu known to almost everyone in India is his life as Ram (Rama in Sanskrit), a prince from the ancient north Indian kingdom of Ayodhya, in the cycle of stories known as the Ramayana (The Travels of Ram).
Lesson 1
(HINDUISM)

Handout 2 • P.2

Basic Beliefs of Hinduism

The god Shiva is the other great figure in the modern pantheon. In contrast to the regal attributes of Vishnu, Shiva is a figure of renunciation. A favorite image portrays him as an ascetic, performing meditation alone in the fastness of the Himalaya. There he sits on a tiger skin, clad only in a loincloth, covered with sacred ash that gives his skin a gray color. His trident is stuck into the ground next to him. Around his neck is a snake. From his matted hair, tied in a topknot, the river Ganga (Ganges) descends to the Earth.... Shiva often appears in this image as an antisocial being, who once burned up Kama, the god of love, with a glance. But behind this image is the cosmic lord who, through the very power of his meditating consciousness, expands the entire universe and all beings in it. Although he appears to be hard to attain, in reality Shiva is a loving deity who saves those devotees who are wholeheartedly dedicated to him.
Basic Beliefs of Hinduism

Section Two: The Vedas

Hinduism in India traces its source to the Vedas, ancient hymns composed and recited in Punjab as early as 1500 BCE. Three main collections of the Vedas—the Rig, Sama, and Yajur—consist of chants that were originally recited by priests while offering plant and animal sacrifices in sacred fires. A fourth collection, the Atharva Veda, contains a number of formulas for requirements as varied as medical cures and love magic. The majority of modern Hindus revere these hymns as sacred sounds passed down to humanity from the greatest antiquity and as the source of Hindu tradition.

The vast majority of Vedic hymns are addressed to a pantheon of deities who are attracted, generated, and nourished by the offerings into the sacred flames and the precisely chanted mantras (mystical formulas of invocation) based on the hymns....

The Upanishads, originating as commentaries on the Vedas between about 800 and 200 BCE., contain speculations on the meaning of existence that have greatly influenced Indian religious traditions. Most important is the concept of atman (the human soul), which is an individual manifestation of brahman. Atman is of the same nature as brahman, characterized either as an impersonal force or as God, and has as its goal the recognition of identity with brahman. This fusion is not possible, however, as long as the individual remains bound to the world of the flesh and desires. In fact, the deathless atman that is so bound will not join with brahman after the death of the body but will experience continuous rebirth.

This fundamental concept of the transmigration of atman, or reincarnation after death, lies at the heart of the religions emerging from India.

Indian religious tradition sees karma as the source of the problem of transmigration. While associated with physical form, for example, in a human body, beings experience the universe through their senses and their minds and attach themselves to the people and things around them and constantly lose sight of their true existence as atman, which is of the same nature as brahman. As the time comes for the dropping of the body, the fruits of good and evil actions in the past remain with atman, clinging to it. Good deeds in this life may lead to a happy rebirth in a better life, and evil deeds may lead to a lower existence, but eventually the consequences of past deeds will be worked out, and the individual will seek more experiences in a physical world. In this manner, the bound or ignorant atman wanders from life to life, in heavens and hells and in many different bodies. The universe may expand and be destroyed numerous times, but the bound atman will not achieve release.

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Basic Beliefs of Hinduism

Section Three: Hindu Worship

The basic form of the temple in India is a square cell, oriented to the four cardinal directions, containing a platform with an image of the deity in the center, a flat roof overhead, and a doorway on the east side. In front of the doorway is a porch or platform, shaded by a roof supported by pillars, where worshipers gather before and after approaching the god. At the founding of the temple, priests establish a sanctified area in the center of the shrine and, while praying and performing rituals, set up the image of the god. The deity is then said to be one with the image, which contains or manifests the power of the god on Earth. Every Hindu temple in India, then, exists as the center of the universe, where the god overlooks his or her domain and aids devotees.

Worship at the temple is not congregational. Instead, individuals or small groups of devotees approach the sanctum in order to obtain a vision (darshana) of the god, say prayers, and perform devotional worship. Because the god exists in totality in the shrine, any objects that touch the image or even enter the sanctum are filled with power and, when returned to their givers, confer the grace of the divine on the human world. Only persons of requisite purity who have been specially trained are able to handle the power of the deity, and most temple sanctums are operated by priests who take the offerings from worshipers, present them directly to the image of the deity, and then return most of the gifts to the devotees for use or consumption later at home.

The home is the place where most Hindus conduct their worship and religious rituals. The most important times of day for performance of household rituals are dawn and dusk, although especially devout families may engage in devotion more often. For many households, the day begins when the women in the house draw auspicious geometric designs in chalk or rice flour on the floor or the doorstep. For orthodox Hindus, dawn and dusk are greeted with recitation from the Rig Veda of the Gayatri Mantra for the sun—for many people, the only Sanskrit prayer they know. After a bath, there is personal worship of the gods at a family shrine, which typically includes lighting a lamp and offering foodstuffs before the images, while prayers in Sanskrit or a regional language are recited. In the evenings, especially in rural areas, mostly female devotees may gather together for long sessions of singing hymns in praise of one or more of the gods.

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A vast number of local Hindu festivals revolve around the worship of gods at the neighborhood, village, or caste level. All over India, at least once a year the images of the gods are taken from their shrines to travel in processions around their domains. The images are carried on palanquins that require human bearers or on human-drawn, large-wheeled carts. The images may be intricately made up in order for the stone or wooden statues to appear lifelike. They may wear costly vestments, and flower garlands may surround their necks or entire shrines. The gods move down village or city streets in parades that may include multiple palanquins and, at sites of major temples, even elephants decked out in traditional vestments. As the parade passes, throngs of worshipers pray and make vows to the gods while the community as a whole looks on and participates in the spectacle. In many locations, these public parades go on for a number of days and include special events where the gods engage in “play” (lila) that may include mock battles and the defeat of demons. The ceremonial bathing of the images and displays of the gods in all their finery in public halls also occur. In the south, where temples stand at the geographic and psychological heart of village and town, some “chariots” of the gods stand many stories tall and require the concerted effort of dozens of men to pull them through the streets.

There are a number of Hindu religious festivals that are officially recognized by the government as “closed holidays,” on which work stops throughout the country. The biggest of these occur within two blocks of time after the end of the southwest monsoon. The first comes at the end of the 10-day festival of Dussehra, late in the month of Asvina (September–October) according to the Shaka calendar, India’s official calendar). This festival commemorates Ram’s victory over Ravana and the rescue of his wife Sita. On the ninth day of Dusshera, people bless with sandalwood paste the “weapons” of their business life, including everything from plows to computers. On the final day of Dussehra, in North India celebrating crowds set fire to huge paper effigies of Ravana. Several weeks later comes Dipavali (Diwali), or the Festival of Lights, in the month of Kartika (October–November). This is officially a one-day holiday, but in reality it becomes a weeklong event when many people take vacations. One tradition links this festival to the victory of Krishna over the demon Naraka, but for most devotees the holiday is a recreation of Ram’s triumphant return with Sita, his wife, from his adventures. People light rows of lamps and place them on sills around their houses, set off gigantic amounts of fireworks, pray for wealth and good fortune, distribute sweets, and send greeting cards to friends and business associates.
The Ramayana

Directions:

The passage below is a simple retelling of the most important story in the Ramayana, the great Hindu epic poem. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow.

The king Dasharatha of Ayodhya had four sons, born to his three wives; the boys’ names were Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna. When Rama was about 16, a wise man came to the court, asking for help against demons; he chose Rama to help him, and Rama’s half-brother Lakshmana came along to help. The boys received weapons and advice from the sage and they managed to destroy the demons. The sage then brought the boys to Mithila, where the king had a contest— whoever could handle his very heavy bow would win the right to marry Sita, a beautiful and virtuous girl. Rama won the contest and he and Sita were married in a great ceremony. They returned to Ayodhya and lived happily for 12 years. Then, as the elderly king prepared to crown Rama as his successor, Bharata’s mother tried to claim the crown for her son. She reminded her husband that he had promised her a boon, and she claimed it—that Rama should be exiled into the forest for 14 years. The king kept his promise, Rama went into the forest out of respect for his father, and the grief-stricken old king soon died. In spite of the hardships they would face, the devoted Sita and loyal Lakshmana joined Rama in his exile.

In the 13th year of the exile, an evil demon, Ravana, had one of his henchmen assume the form of a golden deer; it captivated Sita and she begged Rama to capture it for her. He went off, leaving his brother Lakshmana to protect his wife. Sita was deceived into thinking that Rama was calling for help, and she sent the reluctant Lakshmana to aid him. Ravana, posing as an ascetic, then tricked Sita into leaving the safety of her cottage and carried her away to his island kingdom of Lanka.

In seeking Sita, Rama and Lakshmana met Hanuman, a great monkey hero. Hanuman made a huge leap across the ocean to Lanka, where he spied on Ravana and found the weeping Sita. He offered to rescue her, but she refused to go with him, saying that it is important to Rama’s honor that he rescue her himself. Hanuman then gave Sita Rama’s ring as a token and assured her that Rama would come himself to save her. Hanuman was captured, but he lectured Ravana on the need to release Sita; in return, Ravana punished Hanuman by setting his tail on fire. Hanuman escaped, in turn setting Ravana’s citadel on fire with his burning tail. He returned to Rama and told him what he had learned.

Rama and Lakshmana then enlisted the aid of the monkeys to help them rescue Sita. The monkeys built a floating bridge so that Rama and his soldiers could cross the ocean to Lanka. A great battle ensued, Rama killed Ravana, and Sita was overjoyed to be reunited with her husband.

When Rama returned to his kingdom after the allotted time of exile, he found that his brother Bharata had refused the crown. Instead, although he ruled the kingdom in his brother’s absence, Bharata kept a pair of Rama’s sandals on the throne to remind the people that Rama was the rightful king. Rama was crowned king and reigned over his people for many years of peace and prosperity.
The Ramayana

1. What does the Ramayana say about each of these subjects? Give evidence from the story to support your ideas.
   - The responsibilities of a prince
   - The role of women
   - The existence of evil
   - The importance of friendship

2. Hanuman does not rescue Sita himself because Sita says Rama must do it himself to preserve his honor. What values does Sita’s statement reflect?
Buddhism

Enduring Understandings

- Buddhism was founded in India by Siddhartha Gautama, a prince who gave up worldly possessions to seek enlightenment.
- Buddhism is not concerned with theology, but rather with practical ways of living an upright life.
- Buddhism spread into South and East Asia, but in modern times has also spread to the West.
- Buddhism practices mindfulness through meditation.

Essential Questions

- Who founded Buddhism? What motivated him?
- What are the basic beliefs and practices of Buddhism?
- Where do Buddhists live?
- What is mindfulness? How can it be achieved?
- How do Buddhists express their beliefs through art?

Notes to the Teacher

The study of Buddhism brings you into interesting territory if you always associate religion with belief in the divine. For thousands of years, Buddhism has given people a way of life without requiring a belief in a god. Buddha himself was pragmatic and did not entertain theoretical discussion, but rather focused on what could help people in their immediate pain and suffering. He explained his pragmatism with a story of a man shot with an arrow: Should he inquire into the material the arrow is made from, the length of the shaft, the maker of the arrow, his background, etc.? Or should he focus on removing the arrow and healing the wound? (In fact, Buddha claimed that he found a cure to human suffering, and that this was contained in his teachings.) So as your students learn about the teachings of Buddhism, they explore the question of whether these teachings require anyone either to adopt or to give up any beliefs.

In order to better understand the world of Buddhism, the best place to start is with the story of the life of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, the man who became Buddha. Then move to the teachings of Buddhism, and the spread of the religion, and finally try some experiential learning with meditation and art.

Starting in the latter part of the sixth century BCE, Buddha set an example of traveling and teaching during the dry season and taking a retreat with his monks during the rainy season; they continued to follow this seasonal pattern after his death. The teachings spread gradually in all directions, for a time, until in the year 262 BCE. King Ashoka of India, tired of constant warfare, became a follower of the Buddha and sent out monks to teach the Dhamma (the teachings of the Buddha) more
Buddhism spread more rapidly throughout Asia to the countries on the map that are today predominantly Buddhist. Now there are anywhere from 350 million to a billion Buddhists in the world.

Buddhism came to America in the 1950s through the 1970s. Writers such as Alan Watts (The Way of Zen), Jack Kerouac (Dharma Bums), and Robert Pirsig (Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance) brought the ideas of the Buddha into mainstream awareness. Centers were developed and teachers came from various countries in Asia, including India, Tibet, and Japan, to teach Buddhist philosophy and meditation practice.

In the first part of this lesson, students read a story about the history of the Buddha, who was born Siddhartha Gautama. After they understand how he became the Buddha, they talk about contemporary situations in which they have discovered suffering. They write a journal entry about what kinds of advice might help to deal with such suffering today. Make a photocopy of Handout 1 for each student before the lesson.

Part 2 is concerned with the basic teachings of the Buddha. You will need copies of Handouts 2 and 3 for each student. After reading about the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, students will consider the relevance of these ancient teachings for situations in the contemporary world.

For Part 3, you will need a large world map or student atlases. Students will first learn about the most heavily Buddhist countries in the world and then locate them on a map. All are in South and East Asia. Then they will answer questions about how Buddhism spread. The discussion afterward will include their answers, additional information from the notes above, and ideas about why Buddhism became popular in the United States in the decades of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Part 4 is a meditation exercise. Although this has no specific religious content, it would be wise to discuss it with your administrator before undertaking it. Some school districts support mindfulness and meditation as a tool to help children become calmer and more focused. See, for example, the article “When Mindfulness Meets the Classroom” at http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/mindfulness-education-schools-meditation/402469/. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Design has many articles on the subject. The Web page https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/contemplative-pedagogy/ focuses on the practice from Vanderbilt University’s Center for Teaching. However, be aware that some parents may see this as some type of religious indoctrination, so if any students are uncomfortable with this exercise, let them work quietly on something else so as not to distract the rest of the class. In this exercise, students simply practice five minutes of relaxation, breathing, and observation of their thoughts.

If you would like to pursue this topic, Journeys in Film has a free curriculum guide to the film Dhamma Brothers, a documentary about the use of Vipassana meditation in an Alabama prison. Lessons 7 and 8 in the curriculum have information about the effect of meditation on the brain and a number of other meditation exercises. The lessons can be downloaded at http://journeysinfilm.org/films/the-dhamma-brothers/.

To prepare for Part 5 of the lesson, assemble a slide show from photos of mandalas (geometric figures representing the universe) being made by monks. Photos of both finished mandalas and mandalas in process can be found by Googling “Tibetan sand mandala Smithsonian.” (A few years ago, the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., hosted a group of Tibetan monks who made a mandala from colored sand over a period of two weeks. For more information about this, see https://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/mandala/mandala.htm.)
Run a photocopy of Handout 5: Tibetan Mandalas for each student. You should also bookmark and prepare to show the videos that are listed on the handout. After discussion of mandalas in class, students should go home and download a black-and-white line drawing of a mandala of their choice and gather materials for coloring it. Alternatively, you can download a variety of mandalas for the class by Googling “mandala” and going to Images. There are also books of mandalas for coloring, such as The Mandala Coloring Book: Inspire Creativity, Reduce Stress, and Bring Balance with 100 Mandala Coloring Pages, by Jim Gogarty.

You can also have students design their own mandalas, using symbols that are important to them. Students then have time to color the mandala in class in silence and to reflect on the activity. If you wish to exhibit them, mount the finished mandalas on a classroom wall, but don’t neglect to offer them the chance to destroy their work as the Tibetan monks always do. Do not force them to do so, however.

If you wish to do an actual sand painting in class, rather than just coloring, there is an extensive art lesson for doing so in the Journeys in Film curriculum guide for The Cup, which can be found at http://journeysinfilm.org/films/the-cup/. The art lesson leads students to make a mandala that is meant to be kept. The Cup, a film about a young Tibetan monk who is obsessed with World Cup soccer, is based on a true story. It was filmed at a Buddhist monastery, the “actors” are mostly Tibetan monks, the director is himself a Buddhist monk, and it gives an excellent picture of Tibetan Buddhist practice. (Just be sure you get the right film—there are several of the same title.) Journeys in Film has a full curriculum you can download free for this film.

Duration of the Lesson
Three to five periods

Assessment
Class discussion
Journal entries
Mandalas

Materials
Copies of Handouts 1–5 for each student
Pen or pencil
Journal or notebook
Coloring materials
Projector and computer for showing slides and videos
**Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7**
Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4**
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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**Procedure**

**Part 1: The Historical Origins of Buddhism**

1. Tell students that they are going to begin a lesson on the religion of Buddhism and the culture that it influenced. Ask students if they know anyone who practices Buddhism. Explain that, unlike Hinduism, which also originated in India, Buddhism has a specific founder, who is called the Buddha. Write the name Siddhartha Gautama on the board and explain that this was his name before he became the Buddha.

2. Give students **Handout 1: Siddhartha’s Discovery** and read aloud as they follow along.

3. Ask the students if they understand why Siddhartha left everything else and went on a quest. Most people do not abandon their everyday lives the way he did. Why was his new understanding of illness, old age, and death so shocking to him? (He was 29 before he realized the fact that we grow old and die.) What was the problem he was trying to solve? (That this life does not last forever; that we will be reborn—reincarnated—and the cycle will simply repeat itself; this is inevitable and happens to everyone, continually; that we are helpless in the face of this fact.)

4. Ask students if they have ever thought about the question that Siddhartha considered—why there is suffering in the world. When or how did they become aware of such suffering? Have them give examples from current events or their own experiences, if they are comfortable doing so.
5. Journal Reflection: Have the students brainstorm in their journals, individually, what possible teachings or guidelines could help human beings deal with suffering. Tell them to think of little daily problems, as well as the fact of our own death. You may remind them that Buddha did not refer to a god in his teachings, but let them write freely about anything they want to write down.

Part 2: The Core Teachings of Buddhism

1. Remind students that the Buddha came to his teachings through a long process of observing himself and others, and coming to a working hypothesis about what makes people happy in this life, much the same as the process that a doctor goes through in treating a patient. List the following steps on the board and explain each one:
   a. Observation of symptoms: to determine the problem or symptom
   b. Diagnosis: to determine the cause
   c. Prognosis: to determine the chance of recovery
   d. Prescription: to offer a solution or course of treatment

2. Distribute Handout 2: The Core Teachings of Buddhism: The Four Noble Truths. Read aloud the section on the Four Noble Truths. Then go back to the board and write a summary of each one next to the steps on the board. (Observation of symptoms = there is suffering. Diagnosis = suffering is caused by attachment. Prognosis = there can be an end to suffering. Prescription = following the Eightfold Path is a way to the end of suffering.)

3. Distribute Handout 3: The Core Teachings of Buddhism: The Eightfold Path. Have students read through the handout. Point out to them that the Eightfold Path builds from views about the world (1 and 2) to moral behavior (3, 4, and 5) to practices of meditation and mindfulness (6, 7, and 8). You can have them bracket these steps on their handouts if you wish.

4. Ask students to examine the list of guidelines, and then encourage a free-flowing class discussion using a hypothetical “typical student.” You could ask how a typical student’s daily life would change if he or she were to follow the Eightfold Path. When students have identified a number of changes, ask them what aspect of the Eightfold Path the student might find most difficult? (Answers will vary.)

5. Ask students if they see any overlap between the Eightfold Path and the Ten Commandments. What similarities and differences do they see?

6. Have students write in their journals in response to the following prompt: Select one step in the Eightfold Path. Describe a real-life situation where following that step might have prevented or alleviated suffering and explain why.

Part 3: The Spread of Buddhism

1. Ask students how, in their knowledge of world history, religions have spread throughout history. (By preaching, the adoption of a religion by a ruler, by forcible conversion.)
2. Show students the map of Asia, give them a copy of a map, or have them locate one in their atlases or textbooks. Pass out Handout 4: The Spread of Buddhism. Give students time to study the map and locate the countries on the population chart. Then have them work with a partner to suggest answers to the two questions on the handout.

3. Have a discussion about the spread of Buddhism using the first question on the handout about why Buddhism attracted so many followers and why it would interest both kings and commoners alike. (It answers questions that are universal; frustration, dissatisfaction, and longings of thoughtful people of any rank or station.) Tell them about the spread of Buddhism in Asia using information in Notes to the Teacher, above.

4. Move on to discuss student answers to the second question—why Buddhism could exist easily beside other religions. Ask students why this was possible for Buddhism. (Buddhism did not compete with a system of deities, even in its original home of India. It focused on paying attention to the mind, emotions, and sensations, in order to escape the identification with transient things that cause suffering. Belief in God is tangential to its purposes, which are practical.)

5. Point out that students now know about how Siddhartha’s dissatisfaction with his parents’ world led him to leave home, search for the truth, and discover the Dhamma. Ask them to compare his search with what they know about the searching of young people in the United States in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. What were these young people questioning in the culture and traditions they had grown up with? (Some answers: Consumerism, overseas military action, racial discrimination, limitations on opportunities for women.) Tell students that some popular books for the counterculture were about Buddhism; for example, Jack Kerouac’s The Dharma Bums, Robert Pirsig’s Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Alan Watts’s The Way of Zen, and the works of D.T. Suzuki. If you have some of these books with you, show them to the students. Ask them what it was about Buddhist teachings that would have appealed to young people of those years. (Answers will vary.)

Part 4: Mindfulness: The Art of Stopping Time

1. Share with students the following Zen story of the Man and the Horse:

   The horse is galloping quickly, and it appears that the man on the horse is going somewhere important. Another man, standing alongside the road, shouts, “Where are you going?”

   And the first man replies, “I don’t know! Ask the horse!”

   This is also our story. We are riding a horse, we don’t know where we are going, and we can’t stop. The horse is our habit energy pulling us along, and we are powerless. We are always running, and it has become a habit…we have to learn the art of stopping—stopping our thinking, our habit energies, our forgetfulness, the strong emotions that rule us.1

2. The first form of meditation will be “just sitting.” There is no other directive than to sit—still and in silence—and observe what happens. Provide straightforward, clear

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instructions for students to prepare themselves and for the first time try this exercise for five minutes.

- Whether in a chair or on the floor, find a posture that is comfortable, relaxed, and that you will be able to maintain for five minutes without having to adjust your body.

- Bodily sensations: Do a mental sweep of all your body, from your toes up to your forehead. As you consider each part of your body, let it relax.

- Feelings: Imagine you are sitting on a riverbank, and the river is the flow of emotions through you. Do you get bored? Frustrated? Distracted? Do you remember some past hurt or joy? Identify the feeling, recognize it, greet it. There is no need to judge it, or reject it. Let it flow past and observe it with curiosity.

- Thoughts: Buddhism calls these mental formations. Again, as with feelings, simply observe and recognize your thoughts as they float past, like a cloud in the sky.

- Breath: Start exhaling by pulling in your abdomen. When you have exhaled completely, you will naturally inhale. Let the air flow in and your abdomen gently expand.

3. When the time period allotted is over, have students remain in silence and write quietly in their journal for another few minutes about what they observed, before having a discussion about the experience. What did they notice? (Often beginners report that they didn’t notice their thoughts; they were swept up in their thoughts. Thoughts will come and one leads to another, and they end up daydreaming more than observing their sensations, feelings, and thoughts.)

4. Explain to students that a regular practice of such meditation can actually have a physical effect on the brain. Encourage them to do research on the subject if they are interested.

Part 5: The Art of the Mandala

1. Without prior explanation, show the slides you have assembled of Tibetan sand mandalas.

2. After students have seen the photos, ask them to write down a definition of a mandala in their notebooks and then have several volunteers share their definitions.

3. Distribute Handout 4: Tibetan Mandalas. Read aloud the brief history and function of mandalas in Tibetan Buddhism. Watch one or both videos listed on the handout, depending on the time you have available.

4. Ask students how they would feel about their work being destroyed when it is finished. (Most would object.) Why? (Reasons may vary.) What does this say about our approach to material things and art itself?

5. Tell students that for the Tibetan monks in the video, creating the mandala is a sacred act. Each mandala is made with specific symbolic meaning. Then tell them that today people often color mandalas, and that doing so is perceived as a form of relaxation. If you did Part 4, remind them of the mindfulness exercise and how one of the steps to mindfulness is relaxation. Ask if they think coloring would be a good way to relax.
6. For homework, have students Google the word “mandala” and find images. There are many black-and-white drawings of nonsacred mandalas on the Web. Have them download their favorite design and bring it in, along with crayons, colored pencils, fine-line markers, or anything else they would like to use to color it.

7. Allow them to work on coloring in their mandala with great care and attentiveness, allowing them to lose themselves in the process of it for 10–15 minutes, as seems appropriate for your particular students. Tell them they must maintain silence while they are working. After time has elapsed, even though they will not be finished, ask what their thoughts were as they colored. Were they thinking about the mandala? About other things? Or were their minds blank? Have them finish their mandalas for homework.

8. If you wish, post the completed mandalas on the wall for a gallery walk.

9. Ask the students if they wish to destroy their mandala, just as the monks brush away their sand paintings. Ask them to reflect on their feeling about this in a journal entry, whether they decide to destroy it or not.

Additional Resources

A. Print Materials: General works on Buddhism


B. Print Materials: American texts originally from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s


C. Miscellaneous print text

D. Internet resources

http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/buddhawise.html
General introduction to Buddhism, by Professor C. George Boeree

http://www.buddhanet.net/index.html
A clearinghouse of information on Buddhism

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/buddhism.shtml
The BBC's guide to world religions

National Geographic feature article: “Buddha Rising”

http://www.mysticalartsoftibet.org/mandala.htm
Tibetan mandalas

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/07/mandala-of-compassion_n_5942202.html
Article on Tibetan mandalas in the popular press

E. Film

1. The Cup (Phorpa), directed by Khyentse Norbu
2. Kundun, directed by Martin Scorsese
3. The Little Buddha, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci
4. Life of Buddha, directed by Martin Meissonnier
5. Seven Years in Tibet, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud
In the year 563 BCE, in a small kingdom in what is now Nepal, north of India, a prince was born to the king and queen. His name was Siddhartha Gautama. Soon after his birth, a holy man named Asita arrived and gave a prophecy: Siddhartha would either become a great king and a world conqueror, or a great saint and a world savior. The king wanted Siddhartha to be a great king, so he kept the boy always surrounded by beautiful people and pleasant activities in one of his three palaces.

The young prince was raised to become a warrior and a king. He played games with the young men in the court and lived a life of luxury. When he became a man he married a beautiful woman named Yashodara, and they had a son named Rahula. He felt blessed.

One day all of this changed, however, when he saw four sights that he had never seen before. He left his palace to go riding with his charioteer Chandaka, and although his father had arranged for nothing unpleasant to come into his sight, he happened to see an old man. He was startled, for he had never before seen someone who was wrinkled or bent over. Siddhartha asked, “What is wrong with that man?”

Chandaka answered, “He is old. Time has wrinkled his skin and bent his back.”

“Will that happen to me as well?” asked the prince.

“Old age happens to us all,” replied Chandaka.

Next they came upon some people who were sick, and Siddhartha asked what made them like that. His charioteer explained that they were ill, and that all people get sick at least once in their life.

The third sight was a corpse, ready for cremation. In India most people through the ages have been cremated upon a large, carefully stacked pile of wood. The family watches while the body burns and turns to ashes, which takes a while. This sight shocked Siddhartha, for he had also been sheltered from death. “Chandaka, what is this?”

“This is death, my lord. This is what happens to all people when their body is finished. Their body is laid down and turned to ashes, while their soul will go to another body.” Siddhartha felt anguish over this man’s death, and also over his rebirth, which would simply lead to another cycle of death. In the palace he had had no idea that this was the fate of all people. He could no longer enjoy his pleasure and luxury, knowing what life contained.

The fourth sight was of a monk who had left his home and family and possessions in order to reach enlightenment. Along with his robes, he wore a peaceful expression. Siddhartha then vowed to follow the path of a monk and seek enlightenment. His father tried to persuade him to stay, to think of his duties to his family and kingdom, but he felt a higher duty to relieve the suffering of all mankind. So in the middle of the night, he said goodbye to his sleeping wife and son and left the palace forever. At age 29, he set out on a quest to understand and overcome the suffering involved in being human.

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2 Some stories say these sights occurred on one trip he made outside the palace walls, and some say they took place over four separate trips. In any case, they made him unhappy with his life, unable to live as he had done before.
Siddhartha’s Discovery

The next six years he spent searching, studying, and meditating. Much of that time he spent with a group of ascetics who were extremely hard on their bodies. Siddhartha outdid them all in self-deprivation, and they became his followers. But one day, when he was nearly starving to death, a peasant girl offered him some food and he ate it. He realized he was not going to reach enlightenment by torturing his body, any more than he had reached it in his comfortable life in the palace. The path to enlightenment had to be somewhere between the extremes of luxury and hardship, pleasure and pain. His followers thought he was a traitor to their way of life, but he would eventually call his discovery The Middle Way.

Alone, but nourished and refreshed, he sat down under a tree and determined that he would not get up again until he had reached enlightenment. As he sat, he experienced many false visions and temptations to quit, but he remained there for a day and a night (or many days and nights, according to some versions) and then one morning he was filled with a vast, new understanding and had reached enlightenment. He was now “Buddha” or “Awakened One” for he had awakened from the dream that keeps us ignorant of things as they really are.

At Sarnath near Benares, about a hundred miles from Bodh Gaya, he came across the five ascetics he had practiced with for so long. There, in a deer park, he preached his first sermon, which is called “setting the wheel of the teaching in motion.” He explained to them the Dhamma, or teachings, of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. They became his very first disciples and the beginnings of the Sangha, or community of monks.

He also attracted lay followers, people who listened to his teachings but continued their role in society. Eventually even his father, his wife, and his son came to hear him speak and were converted to his new understanding. For 45 more years he taught, maintained an order of monks, and traveled about the region. Due to his inner peace and wisdom, stories followed him that portrayed him as a god. But he never asked anyone to take anything he said on faith; he wanted his listeners to practice and attain their own freedom. He encouraged them to take responsibility for themselves, and his last words were: “Work out your own salvation with diligence.”

An ascetic is a person who practices severe self-denial, usually for religious or spiritual reasons.
1. The Noble Truth of Suffering: Life involves suffering. There is physical pain, and emotional suffering, such as loss, regret, and the ending of pleasure.

(Suffering is perhaps the most common translation for the Sanskrit word *dukhha*, which can also be translated as imperfect, stressful, or filled with anguish. Contributing to the anguish is *anitiya*—the fact that all things are impermanent, including living things such as ourselves. Furthermore, there is the concept of *anatman*—literally, “no soul.” *Anatman* means that all things are interconnected and interdependent, so that no thing—including ourselves—has a separate existence.)

2. The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering: Our suffering is caused by our attachment to things, which are impermanent. Our desire causes our suffering.

(Attachment is a common translation for the word *trishna*, which literally means thirst and is also translated as desire, clinging, greed, craving, or lust. Because we and the world are imperfect, impermanent, and not separate, we are forever “clinging” to things, each other, and ourselves, in a mistaken effort at permanence. Besides *trishna*, there is *dvesha*, which means avoidance or hatred. Hatred is its own kind of clinging. And finally there is *avidya*, ignorance or the refusal to see. Not fully understanding the impermanence of things is what leads us to cling in the first place.)

3. The Noble Truth of the Ending of Suffering: There is a way to end suffering.

(Perhaps the most misunderstood term in Buddhism is the one that refers to the overcoming of attachment: *nirvana*. It literally means “blowing out,” but is often thought to refer to either a Buddhist heaven or complete nothingness. Actually, it refers to the letting go of clinging, hatred, and ignorance, and the full acceptance of imperfection, impermanence, and interconnectedness.)

4. The Noble Truth of the Method to End Suffering: The way to end suffering is to follow the Eightfold Path.

(Buddha called his teachings, or *dharma*, the Middle Way, which is understood as meaning the middle way between such competing philosophies as materialism and idealism, or hedonism and asceticism. This path, this Middle Way, is elaborated as the Eightfold Path.)
1. Right views: Understanding and accepting the Four Noble Truths.

2. Right intent: The decision to follow the Eightfold Path, and persistence to keep at it.

3. Right speech: Honest and kind speech, avoiding lying and slander.

4. Right conduct: Following the five Buddhist precepts.
   a. Do not kill.
   b. Do not steal.
   c. Do not lie.
   d. Do not be unchaste.
   e. Do not use intoxicants.

5. Right livelihood. Engaging in a profession that supports life, rather than destroys it.

6. Right effort: Exerting oneself to understand the truth, follow the moral code, and engage in mindfulness and meditation.

7. Right mindfulness: Awareness of one’s current thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

8. Right concentration: Meditation.
The Spread of Buddhism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percent of population that is Buddhist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With your atlas, locate and label these countries on the map on the next page. Then answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Buddhism attracted so many followers? Why would it interest kings and commoners alike?

2. In many countries, Buddhism entered and thrived alongside the existing religion (Hinduism in India, Taoism in China, Shinto in Japan). Why was this possible for Buddhism?
The Spread of Buddhism

[Map of Asia and surrounding areas]
Tibetan Mandalas

Tibetan Buddhism developed in the 7th century, and its branch of Buddhism is called Vajrayana, or Tantric, which means the Diamond Way or Thunderbolt Way. In this tradition mandalas have been developed as a teaching and meditation tool, in the form of sand painting.

Since the Chinese took over Tibet in the 1950s, many Tibetan monasteries have been operating in exile around the world. One is the Drepung Monastery, which was created in Lhasa in 1416. It once had more than 10,000 monks, and today is headquartered in Karnataka, India. They also run the Loseling Institute, in Atlanta, Georgia, “…to help preserve the endangered Tibetan culture, which today leads a fragile existence in the exiled refugee communities in India and Nepal.” In the Tibetan language, this art is called dul-tson-kyl-khor, which literally means “mandala of colored powders.”

The Smithsonian Institution defines the Tibetan mandala this way:

The Tibetan mandala is a tool for gaining wisdom and compassion and generally is depicted as a tightly balanced, geometric composition wherein deities reside. The principal deity is housed in the center. The mandala serves as a tool for guiding individuals along the path to enlightenment. Monks meditate upon the mandala, imagining it as a three-dimensional palace. The deities who reside in the palace embody philosophical views and serve as role models. The mandala’s purpose is to help transform ordinary minds into enlightened ones.⁷

Painting with colored sand is difficult and delicate work. The monks draw a geometric outline of the mandala on a wooden platform. Next, they lay down colored sands to fill in the outline. They pour the sand from traditional metal funnels called chak-purs. Each monk holds a chak-pur and runs a metal rod along its surface; as the chak-pur vibrates, the sands flow out onto the mandala outline.

When the sand mandala is completed, the monks then sweep it up. This is a reminder that the world we see is impermanent. Some of the sand is given to other people and some is placed in a nearby body of water.

Watch a quick time-lapse video of monks making the mandala at the Smithsonian here: https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian/posts/372851245938

A longer video with more detail and sound effects is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyqVDezwzku

⁶ http://www.drepung.org/About.cfm
⁷ https://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/mandala/mandala.htm
Judaism

Enduring Understandings

- Judaism was founded as a monotheistic faith at a time when monotheism was uncommon. It is a root of two other monotheistic world religions—Christianity and Islam.

- Judaism maintains a focus on study, community, good works, and equality as outlined in sacred texts, including the Torah, the Talmud, and Pirkei Avot.

- Jewish holidays are intimately connected with Jewish history.

- Despite tensions and occasional violence between Palestinians and Israelis, efforts are being made to promote intercultural collaboration.

Essential Questions

- What is monotheism, and how has this central belief of Judaism had a global impact?

- What are some other key beliefs of Judaism?

- What are significant Jewish holidays, and how are they celebrated?

- How are some artists using their talents to address the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis?

Notes to the Teacher

Structure of the Lesson

In the first part of the lesson, students will examine the founding and early history of Judaism. Before class, print copies of Handouts 1 and 2 for each student. In this first activity, students read part of an essay from National Geographic magazine on the early centuries of Judaism. The full article can be found at http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2009/11/holy-land/sheler-text. You should also find a map of the Middle East or locate one online that you can project. During this activity, students sketch four of the events described and share their drawings with a group. They learn the identities and roles of some of the most important figures in early Judaism.

The second part of the lesson concerns the religious beliefs, rituals, and sacred texts of Judaism. Students research online to learn about mitzvot, or commandments and the core texts of the Torah, the Talmud, and the Pirkei Avot. For this section of the lesson you will need copies of Handouts 3 and 4.

Part 3 acquaints students with Jewish traditions concerning specific important holidays, including Passover, Rosh Hashanah (rawsh hah-SHAH-nah), and Yom Kippur (yahm kih-POOR). Students research in teams and prepare a presentation for the class on particular meaning, foods, and activities associated with each holiday. You may have them present the information in whatever form you choose: blogs, podcasts, PowerPoints, posters, or simple oral reports.

To prepare for Part 4 of the lesson, collect headlines from recent articles about conflict in the Middle East. You may find articles...
about ISIS, the Arab–Israeli conflict, the Gaza Strip, recent attacks on Israelis, razing of homes in Gaza, etc. The disputed territory, officially called Israel but still known as Palestine in the Muslim world, became an independent country in 1948. After World War II, many European Jews who had survived the Holocaust settled there, since it was their traditional homeland. Conflicts arose with the Palestinian Arabs who lived there and there has been sporadic conflict between the two groups ever since. Today, most Palestinians live in two areas, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, also known simply as Gaza, and violent incidents between the two groups continue to occur. This part of the lesson acknowledges the ongoing conflict, but also highlights several attempts to coexist. The first is a mural initiated by an American artist, Joel Bergner, one of several attempts to use visual arts as a way to encourage cooperation. The second is the West–Eastern Divan Orchestra, which performs classical music with musicians from Israel and the rest of the Middle East. Links are provided for students to find information about these efforts; should the links become inactive, you can substitute other similar initiatives.

Part 5 is a concluding pair-share activity to give students the opportunity to review what they have learned in this lesson. Students formulate and then answer questions about the material covered.

Because the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is so often in the news and seems so intractable, you may wish to use the extension activity, which looks at examples of peaceful coexistence between these two groups at various historical periods and in various places. Another useful supplement to this lesson is a discussion in Lesson 4: Christianity about similarities among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Background Information

The main branches of Judaism are Orthodox (including Hasidic), Conservative, and Reform; these groups vary in the degree to which they have adapted Jewish practice to modern life. A brief introduction to these branches may be found at https://detroitjcrc.org/about-us-detroits-jewish-community-branches-of-judaism. A fuller treatment is available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism.html. Resources from multiple groups have been included in the readings and lesson.

In Judaism, many people do not write the name of God out of respect and tradition. So, while it is written below and in some source materials, students may well come across “G-d” in other sources as they complete the lesson.

Founding and Early History

[Earlier dates in Judaism can be the subject of much disagreement among historians. A general estimate, if dates are absolutely required, could be that Abraham’s covenant occurred around 2000 BCE, and that Moses led the Jews from Egypt around 1300 BCE.] Abram was a shepherd in Ur, a city of ancient Mesopotamia. At age 75, he and his wife, Sarai, moved to Canaan, where God promised Abram that he would father a great nation. However, the couple was not able to conceive, so Sarai offered her handmaid, Hagar, to Abram. Hagar had a son, Ishmael. In Muslim tradition, Ishmael is the father of the Arab people.

After that, God told Abram that he and Sarai would have another son, this time together. God changed Abram’s name

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1 Adapted from Jeff Sheler, “The Rise of Three Faiths,” National Geographic, November 2009.
Journeys in Film
The Story of God

to Abraham, and Sarai’s to Sarah. Many years after leaving Mesopotamia, Abraham and Sarah had a son, Isaac. As a test of Abraham’s faith, God told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, but spared Isaac at the last moment.

Abraham is seen as the founder of Judaism, and his covenant with God was passed down to Isaac and then Isaac’s son, Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons, the forebears of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, where the Israelites flourished until they were enslaved by the pharaoh. Moses, a Hebrew slave who was adopted by the pharaoh at a young age, led the Israelites out of slavery as an adult after God came to him in the form of a burning bush. He later received the Ten Commandments from God and brought them to the Israelites. Later still, Moses led his people to the promised land of Israel, though he would never enter the land himself. [Details on Abraham and Isaac can be found in the episode “Who Is God?” in the series The Story of God. Discussion of Moses and the burning bush can be found in the same episode.]

After three centuries of separation among the 12 tribes, Saul united them around 1000 BCE. David, who became king after serving in Saul’s army, strengthened that unity and built the capital at Jerusalem. His son Solomon, the king famous for his wisdom, then built a great temple in Jerusalem, at the site where Abraham was willing to offer Isaac as sacrifice centuries before.

After Solomon’s rule, the nation eventually split into northern and southern rivals. Israel, the northern half, was conquered by the Assyrians in 720 BCE. Judah, the southern half, was conquered by Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, who sacked Jerusalem in 586 BCE and scattered the Jews. Under later Persian rule, some Jews returned home as the faith focused on reclaiming the Torah as the center of Jewish life. They also rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem during the rule of Herod.

From the 300s BCE, Judah fell under a series of rulers, including Alexander the Great. In 63 BCE, Rome conquered Judah (or Judea, as they called it). In 66 CE, Jewish Zealots rebelled against the Romans, who crushed the rebellion in 70 CE and destroyed the second temple in Jerusalem. Without a central temple, Jews would come to worship in synagogues as they again spread around the world into the Diaspora. These themes—belief in one God, holding Israel as a spiritual home while spread around the world, reliance on Torah and legal principle—have served as tenets of Judaism ever since.

From Judaism and the God of Abraham, two more monotheistic faiths grew. Jesus, a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth, led a new sect of Judaism in Roman-held Judea. That sect became Christianity, which sees Jesus as the messiah of Jewish teaching. Christianity grew rapidly, becoming the official Roman religion by the 300s CE. Three centuries later, Muhammad experienced visions of the angel Gabriel and received the verses of the Koran, and Islam began. In more examples of commonality, Islam traces its Arab roots to Ishmael and sees Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and Jesus as prophets. The Hebrew word “shalom” (shah-LOME), for peace, has a cognate in Arabic, “salaam.” [Details on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam having the common God of Abraham can be found in the episode “Who Is God?” in the series The Story of God.]

Beliefs and Rituals (Chabad/Reform Judaism)

There are numerous beliefs and rituals in Judaism, and some of those vary within the different branches of the faith. Some general descriptions of the more well-known beliefs and rituals:

• **Monotheism.** Judaism is monotheistic; this belief in only one God is central to the faith. The Ten Commandments begin by stating “I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods before me.” The Shema (sheh-MAH), the foundational prayer of Judaism, states “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”3 [Details on monotheism in Judaism, and Jewish teachings of Abraham as the first monotheist, can be found in the episode “Who Is God?” in the series The Story of God.]

• **Prayer.** The Shema is foundational, but there are many formal prayers in Judaism. The Shabbat (sha-BAHT), or Sabbath ritual, includes multiple prayer services, one of which features the reading of the weekly Torah portion. There are prayers for all manner of regular and life cycle occasions—ranging from prayers before and after meals to prayers in remembrance and thanksgiving.

• **Mitzvot (MEETZ-vot).** Jewish law and rabbinic commentaries teach that there are 613 mitzvot (commandments) in the Torah. Judaism places a great emphasis on mitzvot that help others as part of its focus on tikun olam (TEE-koon O-lahm), or repairing the world. Some mitzvot of which students might have knowledge include tzedakah (tze-DAH-kah), or giving to charity; observing the dietary laws of kashrut (kahsh-ROOT); attending synagogue; keeping Shabbat; and saying the Kaddish (KAH-dish) prayer when in mourning. The study of the Torah is an important mitzvah as well—not just for rabbis, but for all Jews.4 Mitzvah is the singular form of mitzvot.

• **Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah (bar MITZ-vuh/baht MITZ-vuh).** At age 13, Jewish boys and girls become a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah, respectively—literally translated, “son or daughter of the mitzvah.” In the ceremony that usually accompanies this rite, the boy or girl will lead services and read from the Torah as part of making the transition from child to adult. Under Jewish law, 13 is the age at which Jews take on the adult obligation of fulfilling the commandments of the Torah.5

Sacred Texts (Reform Judaism)

• **Torah.** The foundational sacred text of Judaism is the Torah, which contains the first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Each week at shabbat services, a specific portion of the Torah is read. The Torah scroll is made of parchment, and each scroll is written entirely by hand. The Torah scroll does not have vowels, so reading from the Torah takes a significant amount of practice and study. While the Torah encompasses the first five

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5 http://www.reformjudaism.org/bar-and-bat-mitzvah
books of the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible also includes The Old Testament in two other sections—Prophets and Writings. Readings from Prophets are part of weekly Torah services, and Writings include Psalms and Proverbs.

- Talmud (TAHL-mood [mood as in “wood”]). Talmud translates from the Hebrew “to study.” It is a record of rabbinic teachings and commentaries on how the commandments of the Torah are to be carried out. It includes Jewish law and discussions on the law.
- *Pirkei Avot (PEER-kay Ah-VOTE)*. Translating as “ethics of our fathers,” this text includes stories and sayings from early leaders of Judaism that detail the ethics and morals of the faith.

**Jewish Traditions**

A good summary of Jewish holidays, along with other information about Jewish rituals, can be found at [http://jewishmuseum.net/collections/permanent-collection/permanent-collections/](http://jewishmuseum.net/collections/permanent-collection/permanent-collections/).

**Duration of the Lesson**

Three to five periods

**Assessment**

Early History drawings
Beliefs and Rituals reading responses and theme activity
Sacred Texts responsive journal
Judaism discussion notes and discussion

**Materials**

Computers with Internet access
Map of Middle East
Colored pencils, pens, pencils
Electronic or paper copies of

**Handout 1: The Founding and Early History of Judaism**

**Handout 2: The Rise of Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam**

**Handout 3: Judaism: Belief and Ritual**

**Handout 4: Sacred Texts of Judaism**

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6 http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning/sacred-texts
http://www.reformjudaism.org/torah-tree-life
http://www.reformjudaism.org/talmud
Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

**CCSS.RH.9-10.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**CCSS.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.RH.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**CCSS.WHST.9-10.9**
Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**CCSS.WHST.9-10.10**
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Procedure

Part 1: Founding and Early History of Judaism

1. Tell students that they will begin by studying about the early history, founders, beliefs, rituals, and sacred texts of Judaism. Remind students of any specific state standards that require the study of Judaism and other world religions. Remind students that discussions of religion should be kept respectful, courteous, and factual.

2. Have students log on to their computers. While students are waiting, ask them to share anything they already know about Judaism. You can have students complete a “Think-Pair-Share” for this introduction if you feel it will yield better results.

3. Record student comments or have a student do so. If there are any specific misconceptions noted, address them at the end of the lesson. (Possible student answers: monotheism; founders and early historical figures such as Abraham, Moses, David, etc.; synagogues; Bar/Bat Mitzvah; the Ten Commandments; the Exodus; the Torah; the wearing of yarmulkes; the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.)

4. Once students have shared some ideas and the computers are ready, distribute Handouts 1 and 2. Give students pencils for sketching. Read the first paragraph aloud on Handout 2 and have them define monotheism (belief in one god), patriarch (a male head of a family or tribe or one of the “founding fathers” of a religion), and symbiosis (a mutually beneficial relationship).
5. Have them read **Handout 2** and then follow the directions on **Handout 1** to draw sketches and write captions in the spaces below. Circulate among the students as they work through the lesson to assist any students who might have difficulty.

6. Review the reading and use the map of the Middle East to show where events occurred. Ask students:
   - Where did Abram live at first, according to the article? (Upper Mesopotamia)
   - What are the modern names for that area? (Iraq, Syria, and Kuwait)
   - To what place did he later move? (Canaan) What is the modern name for Canaan? (Israel)
   - What did you learn about each of these figures?
     - Abram/Abraham
     - Sarai/Sarah
     - Isaac
     - Hagar
     - Ishmael
     - Jacob/Israel
     - Moses (On the map, point out Egypt when discussing Jacob and Moses.)
     - David
     - Solomon
   - Where did Solomon build the temple? (Jerusalem)

7. Explain the meaning of the term “the Diaspora” (the dispersion of people from their original homeland). Why did the Diaspora happen? Point out that the enslavement of Africans and their transshipment to the Americas is also called a Diaspora.

**Part 2: Jewish Beliefs and Texts**

1. Explain that the work in this part of the lesson will require students to read on several websites in order to answer some questions about Judaism; then distribute **Handout 3**. Read the first set of directions aloud. (Pronunciation of **mitzvot** is metz-VOTE in Sephardic Hebrew; usually pronounced MEETZ-vot, by English speakers), Torah (taw-RAH in Sephardic Hebrew, usually pronounced TAW-ruh by English speakers).

2. Allow students to read, research, and complete the handout independently while you circulate to give assistance with unfamiliar words or concepts.

**Suggested answers for Handout 3:**

**Shema:** The whole prayer is about monotheism—“the Lord is one.” Since the prayer is said multiple times each day, it makes sense that it is short and simple—easy to remember, easy to recite from anywhere. As with any declaration of faith, it is important that the statement be quickly understood and make sense to anyone who says it or hears it.

**Group 1 Theme:** Prayer, godliness, and learning the Torah are important in Judaism.

**Group 2 Theme:** Jews should speak, act, and think kindly toward others.

**Group 3 Theme:** Jews should not commit violent acts or take the possessions of others.

**Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah:** Jews usually become bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah around their thirteenth birthday. They lead prayers and are called to read from the Torah;
there is a great deal of study before that happens and some synagogues also include a service project. Most bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah ceremonies happen at the synagogue the family attends, but some families choose to travel to Israel and have the ceremony there. Becoming a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah goes back as far as the 6th century and has always been a way to recognize the young person’s entry into adulthood in the Jewish community.

3. Pull students back into the group and ask them to state one new thing that they learned from their reading. Clarify any questions that they may have.

4. If you have been studying other world religions as part of your course, ask students to recall the names of sacred texts from those religions. (For example, the Vedas from Hinduism, the Koran from Islam.) Tell students that there are three collections of texts that are important in Judaism. Distribute Handout 4: Sacred Texts of Judaism.

5. Give students time to read the articles about sacred texts and answer the questions on Handout 4.

6. Ask for student volunteers to share their comments on the Pirkei Avot. To what extent did they find these quotations from more than 2,000 years ago to be relevant today?

7. Collect the handouts or have students complete them for homework.

Part 3: Jewish Holidays and Customs

1. Remind students that school calendars are often designed to incorporate Jewish as well as other holidays. Ask them what information they already know about Jewish holidays. If there are Jewish students in your class, by all means let them explain the holidays, but don’t single them out unless they volunteer.

2. Have the class brainstorm about the holidays they celebrate. What is distinctive about them? (Holidays may have unique purposes, special foods, special gifts, special religious services; there may be different historical reasons behind them.)

3. Ask them if the holidays occur on the same date each year. (New Year’s, Valentine’s Day, Fourth of July, Halloween, and Christmas all occur on specific dates.) Point out that Easter, however, varies from year to year.) Explain that, while our secular, or nonreligious, calendar is based on the solar year, the Jewish calendar is based on the lunar year and so the dates of holidays change from year to year.

4. Tell students that they are going to research holidays that are special to people who practice Judaism. Divide students into seven groups and assign each group a different holiday to research: Shabbat (the Sabbath); Purim; Pesach (Passover); Rosh Hashanah (New Year’s); Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles); Chanukah (Festival of Lights).

5. Tell each group to prepare a presentation (PowerPoint, poster, oral, podcast, video) that explains the special traditions and meaning behind the holiday.

6. Give students time to research and then time in class to present their findings.
Part 4: Arts in Pursuit of Peace

1. Share with the class some of the headlines that you have collected about the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Give students background using Notes to the Teacher.

2. Ask students if there is any way in which art and music can help people address and solve problems. (Art and music are less formal than political efforts, people might understand them better, they might get people emotionally involved, and they might be more accessible to people regardless of education level or language spoken.)

3. Explain that American artist Joel Bergner traveled to Israel to lead a collaborative art project for Palestinian and Israeli youth. Have students view and read the article about the project at http://joelartista.com/2015/06/07/palestinian-israeli-youth-collaboration-projects/. Ask them to look at all the photos of the mural being created and to pay attention to the process itself. Have them look at the students’ facial expressions and body language as they worked. Ask them to discuss, given what they see, how this project supports the idea that young Jews and Muslims can coexist peacefully?

4. Have students watch and listen to several video clips of music by the West–Eastern Divan Orchestra that enlists Jewish and Muslim musicians from throughout and beyond the Middle East as a way of fostering intercultural dialogue. Some possible clips can be found here:
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2zpka5fNo
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2zpka5fNo
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5kJWkqQUY

5. When they have completed their reading and listening, have them write a paragraph using specific examples to explain how artistic efforts are helping to foster common ground between Jews and Muslims.

Part 5: Concluding Discussion

1. Distribute index cards. Have each student write one open-ended question about the material on Judaism that has been covered in this lesson. On a second index card, have students write their names. Collect the index cards and separate them into two envelopes—question cards in one envelope and the students’ name cards in the other.

2. Group students in pairs. Have one pair come to the front of the room. Have the first student pull out a question and read it aloud to the class.

3. Give student pairs two to three minutes to discuss the answer to the question, allowing them to look through their notes and any uncollected handouts. Then have the second student at the front of the room pull a student’s name out of the envelope to answer the question.

4. Continue with this process until you feel an adequate review has been conducted. Make sure to address any remaining unanswered questions students may have about the religion.
5. Conclude by asking students to reflect on the fact that Judaism has survived despite other major religions branching off from it and despite many instances of persecution in history, including the genocide of the Holocaust. Why do you think this has been the case?

Extension Activity

1. Explain to students that Morgan Freeman began The Story of God series after visiting Hagia Sophia, an ancient Christian church in Istanbul, Turkey, which had been used for a while as a mosque. He asked the guide if the murals of the Biblical scenes and prophets had been covered up when it was under Muslim control. He was surprised to hear that they had not been, that Muslims accept the Biblical prophets and stories as part of their religion. In fact, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus are all recognized as prophets in Islam.

2. Remind students about what they have learned about contemporary troubles between members of the three Abrahamic faiths. Tell students that they are going to research some times and places in world history when Muslims and Jews coexisted and cooperated.

3. Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the following research assignments:

a. Read an article on the Prophet Muhammad and religions other than Judaism, which you can find at http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/ma_otherrel.shtml. Find evidence in this article to support the idea that Jews, Christians, and Muslims are all “People of the Book.”

b. Research the coexistence between Jews and Muslims in Spain during the Middle Ages. You may wish to use the blog post at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patrick-burnett/jewish-muslim-relations-peace_b_8582412.html; focus on the section titled “Andalusia and Abrahamic coexistence in European history.” Another useful article: “From Golden to Grim: Jewish Life in Muslim Spain” at http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/from-golden-to-grim-jewish-life-in-muslim-spain/; focus on the first three paragraphs. Using the two sources for evidence, write a persuasive paragraph, making and supporting the argument that Jews and Muslims shared common ground in Spain in the Middle Ages.

c. Once Ferdinand and Isabella took control of Spain, the period of Middle Ages coexistence came to an end—in fact, both Jews and Muslims were expelled during the Inquisition of the late 1400s. For the Sephardic (Spanish) Jews who escaped the Inquisition, the Muslim-led Ottoman Empire became a new home in the 1500s. Look at coexistence and common ground in the Ottoman Empire. Locate the article at http://jewishhistory.research.wesleyan.edu/i-jewish-population/5-ottoman-empire/. Read the first paragraph and the fourth paragraph (starting with “Most prominent and most studied among the Jews of Ottoman lands have been the Sephardim”). Then, use examples from the readings to answer these questions: As dhimmi, how were Jews (and Christians) treated in Muslim lands? What rights did they have, and what rights were they refused? At the height of Jewish–Muslim relations in the Ottoman Empire, what was life like for the Sephardic Jews? How did they contribute to the Empire?
d. Since the founding of modern Israel in 1948, relations between Jews and Muslims have been particularly turbulent—multiple wars, continued armed conflict, and mistrust on both sides. In contrast, discoveries made by U.S. forces after the fall of Saddam Hussein have given a clear picture of the common ground that existed between Jews and Muslims in Iraq for much of the 20th century. Now go to https://www.ija.archives.gov/exhibit-pages/personal-communal-life.html and read about the Jews of Iraq in the 20th century. Summarize your findings in a paragraph. Did these facts surprise you? Why, or why not?

5. Give students the opportunity to share their findings with their classmates.
Handout 1  The Founding and Early History of Judaism

Read the article on pages 1–3 of Handout 2, adapted from the November 2009 National Geographic article “The Rise of Three Faiths,” by Jeff Sheler. From the many events described, select four that stand out. In the frames below, sketch each event you selected (one per frame). Give each frame a short caption that summarizes what you’ve sketched.

Caption:  

Caption:  

Caption:  

Caption:  

Caption:  

Caption:
They are the great ancient repositories of monotheism—the religions of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad—and their visions and cultures often conflict, sometimes violently. Yet they are locked in an uneasy symbiosis, connected by history and a shared reverence for the land that bore them all from a single seed. Each traces its origins to the story of a solitary figure, an ancient patriarch and exemplar of faith, who undergirds the sacred literature of all three.

That founding father was Abram, an obscure shepherd and the reputed son of an idol maker, who packed his tents and his family and left his ancestral homeland in upper Mesopotamia, along with its manifold deities, in obedience to the command of the one true God: “Go … from your father’s house to the land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great.”

And so at the age of 75, Abram and his wife, Sarai, set out for the land of Canaan. There he would live the life of a nomad, tending his flocks, first at Shechem, a great walled city guarding a strategic pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, and later at Bethel, Ai, Hebron, and other cities to the south.

It was at Shechem, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, that the Lord first appeared to Abram and promised that his descendants would inherit the land around him. Out of gratitude, Abram erected an altar—an act of veneration he may have learned from his forebears’ worship of Nanna, the great moon god of Ur, and his son Utu, the sun god. In years to come, Abram would build many altars and offer many sacrifices to the one God he had come to believe was over all creation, a God he knew as Yahweh.

Despite God’s promise that Abram would father a great nation, Sarai remained childless in her 70s. Despairing, Sarai offered Abram her handmaid, Hagar, who bore him a son. They named him Ishmael. (According to Islamic tradition, Ishmael would become the father of the Arab people.) The Lord appeared to Abram again, saying the promise would be fulfilled not through Ishmael but through a son to be born to Sarai. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, father of a multitude of nations, and Sarai’s to Sarah, meaning “princess,” and a year later, at the age of 90, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. As a test of Abraham’s faith, God commanded him to sacrifice Isaac but stayed his hand at the last moment.

God’s covenant with Abraham was passed to Isaac and to his son, Jacob, who was given the name Israel—one who wrestled with God. Jacob’s 12 sons would become progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel. Seeking refuge from famine, Jacob and his clan migrated to Egypt, where they settled in the eastern portion of the fertile Nile Delta—the biblical land of Goshen—and their descendants “multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.” After a few generations, their fortunes turned: They were enslaved by the pharaoh, who “made their lives bitter with hard service.” Through strange chance, a young...
The biblical accounts that follow are familiar—Moses’ confrontation with the pharaoh, the sending of plagues and the striking down of the firstborn of every household, the marking of Israelite doorposts with lamb’s blood so that death would pass over their houses—and they resulted, as intended, in the Israelites’ release. Moses led his people out of Egypt and into the Sinai, where he received the Ten Commandments and the other laws of the Torah. After wandering for 40 years, the Israelites arrived at the Jordan River and crossed into the land God had promised to their fathers.

Roughly 300 years later, faced with a growing military threat from the Philistines, the independent-minded Israelite tribes began to unite, according to the Bible, first under Saul and subsequently under David, who forged them into a powerful nation with Jerusalem as its capital. The reigns of King David and his son Solomon marked the glory years of ancient Israel, roughly 1000 BCE to 930 BCE. During Solomon’s reign, vast wealth poured into the kingdom, funding massive construction projects.

Of all Solomon’s buildings, the grandest was the temple in Jerusalem, a mammoth, elaborately adorned edifice of quarried stone and Lebanon cedar that would become the House of Yahweh, the focal point of the Israelite religion. Built on Mount Moriah—the site where Abraham was said to have offered up Isaac—the temple became a place of daily prayer and burned offerings, replacing the crude altars that had been scattered throughout the countryside. It stood for more than 370 years. (A second, more modest temple was later built on the same site. It would be renovated and expanded by Herod the Great about 10 BCE.)

When Solomon’s reign ended, the nation descended into religious and political turmoil and split into rival northern and southern kingdoms. Israel, the northern kingdom, came to an end with an Assyrian conquest in 720 BCE. The southern kingdom, Judah, survived until the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem in 586 BCE. and carried the people into captivity. It was a period that saw the rise of prophets—stern men of God who chastised the people for their faithlessness and who warned of calamities that would befall them unless they repented. After the Persians overthrew the Babylonians in 539 BCE., many Jews returned home. Their religious leaders set about instituting reforms that emphasized the role of the Torah in Jewish life and rooted out cultural influences that had encroached on Jewish traditions during captivity.

From the middle of the fourth century BCE onward, the Holy Land came under the control of a succession of military rulers, starting with Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. and ending with the Romans, who conquered Judaea in 63 BCE and held it for centuries. During Roman rule, four groups vied for attention among the Jews: the Sadducees, the priests of the temple and overseers of its ceremonies; the Pharisees,
Lecture 3 (JUDAISM)

Handout 2 • P. 3

The Rise of Three Faiths:
Judaism, Christianity, Islam

lay religious scholars; the Essenes, an apocalyptic sect based near the Dead Sea; and the Zealots, advocates of violent resistance.

In 66 CE, the Zealots and others revolted against the Roman garrison in Jerusalem. After some initial success, the rebellion was crushed by overwhelming Roman force, and both the city and the Second Temple were destroyed in an event that sealed the future direction of Judaism. Without a temple, the party of the Sadducees ceased to exist, and the practice of burned offerings and animal sacrifices came to an end. The Pharisees, with their emphasis on the synagogue and the oral and written law, became dominant. With Jerusalem in ruins and Jews scattered, Judaism became a religion of the Diaspora.
A. Jewish Belief: Monotheism and Prayer—Reflecting on the Shema (Sheh-MAH)

**Directions:** Read about the Shema at http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/705353/jewish/The-Shema.htm. (Note that in Judaism, the name of God often is not written or spoken—so, “G-d” is used in place of “God” in this source.) Explain how the words of the Shema reflect the importance of monotheistic belief in Judaism. Also, consider the prayer itself—why is it short and simple? How might that be important for a “declaration of faith”?

B. Jewish Belief: Themes of the Commandments

**Directions:** The Ten Commandments are just a start; there are actually 613 mitzvot or commandments in the Torah, the primary sacred text of Judaism. Below, you will find three groups of mitzvot. Read each group, and then write one sentence that explains the theme you see in that group.

**Group 1**
- To know there is one God
- To love God
- To pray each day
- To learn the Torah
- To teach the Torah

**Group 1 Theme:**


**Group 2**
- Do not embarrass other people.
- Do not gossip.
- Do not oppress the weak.
- Do not take revenge.
- Do not break your word.
- Give charity.

**Group 2 Theme:**


Group 3

• Do not murder.
• Do not kidnap.
• Do not rob or steal.
• Pay your debts.
• Do not scheme to acquire the possessions of others.

Group 3 Theme: ________________________________________________________________

C. Jewish Belief and Ritual: Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah

At age 13, Jewish boys and girls become Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah, respectively, meaning “son or daughter of the commandments.” Once you read about the ritual at http://www.reformjudaism.org/bar-and-bat-mitzvah, write a summary paragraph below, addressing each of the “5 W’s”—Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

\[\text{Note that Hasidic or Orthodox girls don’t lead services or read aloud from the Torah.}\]
Sacred Texts of Judaism

Directions:

Earlier, you found themes in some of the Torah’s 613 commandments. Now, you will respond to readings about the Torah and two other Jewish sacred texts—the Talmud (TAHL-mood [mood as in “wood”]) and Pirkei Avot (Peer-KAY Ah-VOTE). After you read each section, answer the questions below.

The Torah

Locate the website at http://www.reformjudaism.org/torah-tree-life. Read the quotation from Proverbs at the top of the page and the paragraph that follows. Then slip down on the page and read “How We Read Torah.” Write a summary of your reading that addresses the “5 W’s”—Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

The Talmud

Read the first paragraph of this article about the Talmud at http://www.reformjudaism.org/talmud. Then write one sentence here that explains how the Torah and Talmud are related.
Pirkei Avot

Pirkei Avot is translated as “ethics of the fathers.” In this text, Jewish scholars and rabbis discuss the morals and ethics of the faith. For each of these Pirkei Avot quotations, write a response to the right. Consider your own reaction to the quote and how it might apply to modern life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Hillel, who lived in Jerusalem about 2,100 years ago, used to say, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? Yet, if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Akiva, who lived at the end of the first century and beginning of the second, said, “Everything is foreseen, yet free will is granted; by goodness is the universe judged, yet all depends on the preponderance of (good) deeds….”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon Ben Zoma, who lived in the second century CE, said, “Who is wise? The one who learns from all people… “Who is mighty? The one who subdued the evil inclination… “Who is rich? The one who rejoices in his portion… “Who is honored? The one who honors other human beings….”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enduring Understandings

- The central unifying element for all Christian churches is the belief that Jesus of Nazareth, both God and human, is the source of salvation.

- Over the centuries Christianity, once persecuted and oppressed, became a powerful political and social force.

- Although different in many ways from other world religions, Christianity shares many central values with them.

Essential Questions

- What are the central beliefs, values, and ideals of Christianity?

- Why is Christianity divided into many different and sometimes combative sects?

- How has Christianity affected political and scientific developments over the centuries?

Notes to the Teacher

Throughout your study of world religions, you will want to emphasize the importance of two key responsibilities for your students. One is to maintain respect for each other’s personal beliefs when and if students volunteer them. The other is to be sure that, in written assignments and classroom discussions, students use relevant and sufficient evidence to support their ideas. Be sure to discuss ground rules for class discussion when starting this or other lessons in this series. You may even wish to remind students of several key Common Core standards:

  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d
  Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1
  Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Be sure to remind students of these responsibilities whenever it seems to be necessary as you proceed through the lesson.

In the United States and most of the rest of the Western world, many people assume that they know exactly what the term Christianity means, but their understandings are often widely varied. The differences can be confusing to those not acquainted with Christian traditions, as well as to Christians themselves.
Christianity has its roots in Judaism and began with a man often referred to as Jesus of Nazareth, himself a devout Jew. Most of what we know (or think we know) about him is based on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Christian Testament of the Bible. The Roman historian Tacitus recorded information about the trial and execution of Jesus, providing authentication for some elements recorded in Scripture. Beyond that, as with many significant persons who lived long ago, much of his life is shrouded mysteriously in the unreachable past, available only in the impressions recorded or shared by those who knew him. What is undeniable is that, even today, two millennia after his death, the mere mention of his name is enough to evoke passionate responses, some positive, some negative.

Christianity began with a small group of Jewish followers of Jesus and was the object of persecution in its early years. Intensive proselytizing that went beyond the Jewish community resulted in exponential growth. In the fourth century the Roman Emperor Constantine changed the future of the fledgling religion by bestowing approval on it. Over the course of centuries, it became the most powerful political force in Europe. From the first, there were divisions (the term heresies was applied to beliefs of dissidents), but the first major split, between the Roman Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, occurred in the 11th century, after years of drifting apart. The enormous political power of the pope and other church leaders led to corruption in many forms. This led to protests and the aptly named Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. These major splits eventually gave birth to the many faces of Christianity as we see it today. At least superficially, there are few similarities among, for example, the agricultural and technology-resistant Amish, passionate Evangelicals, and strict Roman Catholics. The common factor—one that differentiates Christianity from other belief systems—is belief in the saving mission of Jesus of Nazareth.

The first activity in this lesson focuses on the teachings of Jesus as reflected in the Gospels. Some students are likely to feel that they are already well informed on this subject. Others may balk and resist being taught about religion. You may need to emphasize that your purpose is not religious education, but the development of a shared basis to understand the role of religion, in this case, Christianity, in history and in current events. In this activity, students read some quotations of Jesus from the Gospels and answer questions about them. Next, they learn about parables and consider their applicability to the present.

The second activity presents a brief history of Christianity, including its division into numerous and diverse sects, each often with the conviction that it is the “one, true church.” Students choose or you assign a topic for research on key moments in the history of Christianity from a list on Handout 2.

Part 3 is an explanation of the beliefs and practices shared by all Christians—devotion to God, willingness to help others, belief that life does not end with death, Sunday as a day of worship, and baptismal commitment, for example. Students may become involved in discussion of differences between Christian churches as well, but try to emphasize commonalities. Remind students of the need for respecting others’ views; this is not a debate on who is right or wrong.

In the fourth part of the lesson, students study one art form of the many that emerged from Christian belief—the great cathedrals. They see photographs of these buildings and
learn about differences in traditional architectural styles. They consider the challenges involved in building a Gothic cathedral in an era without modern tools and materials. To prepare for this part of the lesson, collect photographs of the churches listed in chronological order from the Internet or other sources and familiarize yourself with architectural styles. When you show the photos, show them in groups and help students identify key elements of different architectural styles.

Next, students consider interactions between Christianity and scientific/technological development. Christianity has tended to be traditional in perspective—far from hasty to adopt new perspectives or developing fields in science and technology. The burgeoning of science in the 16th century with figures such as Galileo evoked conflict with the established church; science and technology continue to expand the possibilities of what humans can do, and these advances can rankle traditional believers. The result can be a sense that belief and science are antithetical. Help students to realize that attitudes sometimes change over time, just as the Catholic Church’s attitude toward the sun being the center of the solar system has.

In the last activity of the lesson, students consider a recent event, the address of Pope Francis to the United States Congress in 2015, and how it connects with today’s social and political events. Page 3 of **Handout 5** contains optional activities. Duplicate this page only if you are planning to use these activities.

**Duration of the Lesson**

Three to four class days

**Assessment**

Collected handouts
Student essay about a parable
Reports on topics in the history of Christianity
Participation in group and class discussions

**Materials**

Copies of these handouts for all students:

**Handout 1: Beginnings of Christianity**

**Handout 2: Christianity Through the Millennia**

**Handout 3: Christian Belief and Worship**

**Handout 4: Galileo**

**Handout 5: Pope Francis Addresses the United States Congress**

Copies of Bible passages either in print or online, prepared ahead of time. (Note: References in the unit are based on the King James translation, but you can also use any readily available text. If students have strong individual preferences, allow them bring their own. Students may also locate verses from the Bible online. They may find the differences in translations interesting.)
Lesson 4 (CHRISTIANITY)

Lesson 4 (CHRISTIANITY)

**Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson**

**CCSS English Language Standards for History/Social Studies**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3**
Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8**
Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.

**Procedure**

**Part 1: Origins and Basic Beliefs**

1. Tell students that the majority of people in the United States, the rest of the Americas, and Europe who have a religion classify themselves as Christians. Ask students what the term “Christians” means. (While people may worship, often or seldom, in a variety of churches—including Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and many others—what they have in common is a belief in Jesus of Nazareth, often referred to as Jesus Christ. Their sacred text is the Bible, with an emphasis on the Christian Scriptures that begin with four Gospels and conclude with the Book of Revelation.)

2. Ask students when Christianity has played an important role in historical developments. (For example, during the Middle Ages, the Crusades were wars between Christians and Muslims. Many of the earliest settlers in the New World were motivated by a desire for religious freedom. Oppression and wars have sprung from one religion’s assumption of superiority over others. One of the fundamental principles in the foundation of the United States was separation of church and state.)

3. Explain that the class’s consideration of Christianity as one of the world’s major religions will start at the beginning, with a brief look at Jesus as teacher. Distribute **Handout 1: Beginnings of Christianity** and ask students to complete it. Follow with a class discussion of their responses. (Some significant themes: Jesus concluded that all of Judaism’s many teachings could be boiled down to two major commands—total love of and commitment to God and selfless love of others. He did not advocate self-pride and acquisition of riches; he did advocate justice. He did not
see religion as an excuse to evade civil authority. His view of religion was inclusive, not based on ethnic superiority. At least some Christians feel a responsibility to spread the faith.

4. Allow students to bring up other aspects of what Jesus actually taught. (For example, he abominated use of the temple for profit motives; he gave the word “neighbor” a broad interpretation; he did not excuse religious leaders from moral responsibility.)

5. Explain that Jesus, as described in the Christian Scriptures, often used simple stories as tools in teaching. Divide the class into groups and have each focus on one of the following stories or parables attributed to Jesus:

   a. Matthew 25: 14–30 (the parable of the talents or of wise vs. foolish servants)
   b. Luke 10: 30–37 (the Good Samaritan)
   c. Luke 15:3–7 (the shepherd seeking a lost sheep)
   d. Luke 15:11–30 (the Prodigal Son)

Assign groups to summarize the stories (or to read them aloud to the class) and to explain the meaning of each. (For example, talents or gifts are meant to be used wisely, not cautiously protected or hidden away; neighbors are not limited to people in one’s own cultural group; stewardship involves going out of one’s way to help those who are lost; even great hurt can be forgiven because of love.) Ask each group to come up with a contemporary situation for which the parable might have some relevance.

6. Assign students to read another of the parables narrated in the Gospels (for example, the story of the mustard seed in Matthew 13: 31–32 or the one about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16: 19–31) and write short essays in which they analyze themes and contemporary applications. (Note: Students with little familiarity with the Gospel texts will find it helpful to know that many translations include headings to identify parables; the Internet can be a helpful source.)

Part 2: The Later History of Christianity

1. Explain that two millennia have passed since the origin of Christianity. In much of the world, Jesus’ life is so important that it is the basis of a view of history, dating everything as either BC (“before Christ”) or AD (“anno domini” in Latin, meaning “year of the Lord”), a system that began with Emperor Dionysius during the 6th century. Some people today prefer to use BCE and CE, “Before the Common Era” and “the Common Era.”

2. Tell students that they are going to learn about some key points in the history of Christianity. Distribute Handout 2: Christianity Through the Millennia and ask students to choose a topic, or assign topics to individuals or groups. [If you are planning to use Part 5 on Christianity and science later on, you may ask students not to focus on Galileo in Handout 2 because he will be adequately covered in Part 5, Handout 4.]

3. Provide students time to read about their topic and to prepare a short report for the class. Alternatively, students may make a poster for display that includes key information about the topic they have researched.

4. Follow the presentations with discussion of the following questions:

   When you compare the teachings of Jesus with the history of Christianity, what conclusions can you reach?
How has Christianity influenced Western history? What issues have caused dissension and conflicts among Christian groups?

Points for discussion:
• There is a significant disparity between the beliefs and values Jesus taught and the development of power and wealth in the institutional churches that followed.
• Opportunities for unlimited power and wealth often appealed most strongly to those with less than altruistic motivation.
• The Roman Catholic Church was the main unifying factor in Europe throughout the medieval period.
• The church’s political power diminished with divisions into dissenting sects because of dissensions regarding authority, beliefs, and lifestyles.
• Tolerance is a fundamental issue. Some see tolerance as evidence of the love of neighbor about which Jesus taught; others see it as a betrayal of religious commitment.

Part 3: Christian Beliefs and Worship

1. Point out that although there are many diverse denominational and nondenominational churches that call themselves Christian, they do share commonalities. These beliefs and practices distinguish Christians from Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and practitioners of other belief systems.

2. Distribute Handout 3: Christian Belief and Worship and ask the class to read the information. Depending on the background of your students, you may want them to make additional comments on the information on the handout. Conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Possible answers:
• Some churches also provide schools as alternatives to public education; many provide instructional programs for both children and adults.
• When a disaster of some type occurs, people of many denominations often come together for vigils or prayer services.
• Many churches provide or contribute to food banks.
• Some churches organize protests or take positions in political campaigns or regarding moral issues.

Part 4: The Great Cathedrals

1. Since the early Middle Ages, many Christian groups have harnessed resources and labor in their communities to build remarkable houses of worship. Show students photos you have assembled of these sites in the following order:

   Pisa Cathedral, Italy
   National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.
   Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.
   Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris
   Chartres Cathedral, France
   St. Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City
   St. Paul’s Cathedral, London
   Hagia Sophia, Istanbul
   St. Basil’s Cathedral, Moscow
   The Mormon Tabernacle, Salt Lake City
   Sagrada Familia, Barcelona
   Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France
   Lakewood Church, Houston
2. As you show the photos, point out key architectural details:

a. Romanesque Cathedrals (Pisa Cathedral, National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception exterior): massive, thick walls that are often double shells filled with rubble; small windows; rounded doors and arches; domed roofs and half-barrel vaults; heavy, load-bearing pillars.

b. Gothic Cathedrals (Notre Dame, Chartres, Washington National Cathedral): very tall, with relatively thin walls reinforced by buttresses; pointed arches; stained glass, including rose windows; many statues of saints, other religious figures, and gargoyles.

c. Renaissance Cathedrals (St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City): emphasis on geometry, symmetry, and balance; uses elements of classical style, including domes, rounded arches, and pillars.

d. Baroque Cathedrals (St. Paul’s Cathedral, London): frequent use of statues, carvings, paintings, and other decoration; emphasis on light; sense of movement in architectural elements and decoration; sense of the theatrical and grand.

e. Byzantine Churches (Hagia Sophia, National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception interior): use of domes, marble columns, and inlaid stone floors, mosaics on the interior walls, sometimes coffered ceilings (ceilings with sunken panels) covered with gold.

f. Explain that there were other large churches built that have unique or very modern styles. Show the photos of St. Basil’s, the Mormon Tabernacle, the Sagrada Familia, and the Lakewood Church in Houston. (Point out that the Lakewood Church is the one shown near the beginning of the episode “Who Is God?” in The Story of God; you may wish to show that part of the episode.)

3. Tell students that one Gothic cathedral, the Washington National Cathedral, was started in 1907 and wasn’t finished until 1990. Ask students to speculate on how the great medieval cathedrals could have been built without modern machinery. If time permits, have them research this question in their textbook and on the Internet. A PBS video, Nova: Building the Great Cathedrals, is an excellent resource, as is David Macaulay’s book Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction, with superb illustrations.

Part 5: Christianity and Science

1. Ask students to identify the fastest changing elements of life in the 21st century. (Technology advances so quickly that many devices become obsolete shortly after coming on the market. Science never settles—it is always pushing against former limits, challenging hypotheses and developing new ones.) Ask students how science/technology and religion interconnect. (Sometimes people perceive scientific advancement and religious belief as mutually exclusive. Some religious people may view science as a threat or as antithetical to love of God and others; others may perceive religion as overly conservative, even backward, or they may resist religion, feeling that it is being forced on them.)

2. Show students the scene from the beginning of the episode “Creation” in The Story of God, in which Morgan Freeman interviews Monsignor (now Archbishop) Marcelo Sánchez
Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican. In discussing Galileo, the monsignor tells Freeman that he thinks the story about Galileo being at odds with the Church is apocryphal. Distribute **Handout 4: Galileo**, and ask students to read the information about Galileo. Conduct a discussion based on the questions. A few key points for discussion:

- People and institutions are often reluctant to abandon beliefs, even when the beliefs prove to be untenable.
- It is easy to mistake a generally accepted idea as a religious axiom.
- Religious leaders often do not have a strong background in science.
- The fact that humans can do something scientifically possible does not necessarily mean that it is an ethical thing to do.

3. Ask students how Monsignor Sorondo explains the change in the church’s attitude toward Galileo. (He distinguishes between the theological understanding of creation and the scientific understanding; the Big Bang theory is seen as helping to explain the details of God’s creation of the world.)

**Part 6: Christianity and Social Issues**

1. Remind students that the pope, based in Rome, Italy, is the head of the Roman Catholic group of Christians. Many other groups, both Christian and non-Christian, extend respect toward him, even while not always agreeing with him. Explain that in 2015 Pope Francis visited the United States and delivered a speech to Congress. Distribute **Handout 5: Pope Francis Addresses the United States Congress**. Ask students to read the excerpts and to answer the questions. (Note: As an alternative, you can have students read or listen to the whole speech. It is available on many websites, such as [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/transcript-pope-franciss-speech-to-congress/2015/09/24/6d7d7ac8-62bf-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/transcript-pope-franciss-speech-to-congress/2015/09/24/6d7d7ac8-62bf-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html).

2. Conduct a discussion based on the handout. (Some people may have resisted the pope’s address based on belief in complete separation of church and state; some may have had other political or personal motives. The speech reflects clear awareness of evils and suffering in the world, but also shows faith in a capacity to make things better. One can imagine a certain amount of stiffening in the audience at the mention of specific issues, for example immigration and capital punishment. The ideals of Christianity—indeed, of all religions—are not, and never have been, simple in application, but they play a significant role in what individuals and societies think and do.)

3. If you wish to give students additional optional assignments, go over page 3 of **Handout 5** with them.

**Extension Activity**

1. Write the following quotation from Hans Kung, a prominent theologian and scholar of multiple religions, on the board.

   “There will be no peace among the peoples of this
world without peace among the world religions. There will be no peace among the world religions without peace among the Christian churches.

“The community of the Church is an integral part of the world community.”

Ask students to write short essays in which they respond to the quotation; relate it to current local, national, or international events; and explain the relevance of a study of religion to the social studies curriculum.

2. Ask students, working individually or in small groups, to design posters in which they use both visual images and words to depict ideas they have considered during this lesson or concluded as a result of this unit.

3. Ask students to respond to the following prompt: In any town, city, or suburb, it is not uncommon to see a Lutheran Church on one corner, a Catholic one down the street, a Baptist one within a block or two, a Methodist church not far away, and so on. Is this true in your neighborhood or town? Why, or why not? How do the various churches relate to one another and to events in the region? How do they relate to nearby non-Christian groups?

4. Invite clergy from several Christian denominations in your area to participate in a panel on a specific subject of interest to your students, for example, ministry to the homeless, the use of a communion service, immigration, or civil disobedience.

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Today we see Christianity in many diverse forms. What they have in common is belief in Jesus of Nazareth, an itinerant Jewish preacher who lived in Israel two millennia ago. He was a carpenter in Nazareth; at around the age of 30, he left home to travel and preach. During his three years of preaching, Jesus inspired numerous followers and incited fear and anger among Roman rulers and temple leaders. He was tried and executed by crucifixion, a common form of execution among the Romans at that time. Christians believe that three days later he rose from the dead and inspired his followers to spread Christianity worldwide.

Directions:

Read the following excerpts and answer the questions in preparation for a class discussion:

1. According to the Book of Matthew, Jesus was once challenged on the subject of Jewish law. He answered:

   Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets. (Matthew 22: 37–40)

   What did Jesus see as the most important things for people to do? What do you think he meant?
2. Earlier in his career, Jesus, speaking to his closest followers, said some rather counter-cultural things, among them:

   Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven…. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy…. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5: 3, 7, 10)

   Here the message was not about law, but about ideals. What beliefs and values are expressed?

3. Challenged by temple authorities about government and religion, Jesus said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Mark 12:17)

   What does this mean for us today?
Directions:

Read through the following timeline and choose a topic to research. (Use your history textbook and other resources to find out additional information.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 0–33 CE</td>
<td>Jesus lived and for three years taught and attracted both followers and enemies, until he was tried and executed by crucifixion, a method of capital punishment used by the Romans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First century CE</td>
<td>The early Christian communities were sects of Judaism whose customs and experiences are partially reflected in the Bible’s Acts of the Apostles. Believers attempted to spread belief in Jesus; among them was a Jewish convert to Christianity first named Saul, then Paul. Christians were chiefly persecuted by the Romans, who saw the new religion as a threat to their beliefs and authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313 CE</td>
<td>With the Edict of Milan in 313 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine made Christianity a legitimate religion. In 380, it was named the official religion of Rome. The main religious centers were Rome and Constantinople. Over the ensuing centuries, conquering groups overran existing governments, and the church, once mainly a religious force, became the most powerful impetus in the Western world, making the pope in Rome a formidable and immensely wealthy ruler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1053 CE</td>
<td>After years of dissension over various issues, including authority, the church centered in Constantinople began its official separation from the church in Rome, creating the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church as separate entities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1095–1291</td>
<td>Conflict between Christians and Muslims led to wars called the Crusades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance</td>
<td>The Papacy in Rome eventually became the domain of wealthy Italian families; the power and material benefits often attracted men with little interest in religious or moral values. This became a source of scandal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1517</td>
<td>In Wittenberg, Martin Luther, a German monk, publicly rebelled against laxity and corruption in the church by posting his 95 Theses on the door of a church in 1519. Excommunicated in 1521, he was the founder of the Lutheran Church.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 4 (CHRISTIANITY)

Handout 2 • P. 2

Christianity Through the Millennia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16th century</td>
<td>Later reformers, including John Calvin and John Knox, further extended the Protestant Reformation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1531</td>
<td>Henry VIII, desiring to escape papal authority but not disputing religious beliefs, separated the Church of England from Rome. This was the foundation of what is sometimes called the Anglican or the Episcopal Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Meanwhile, the Renaissance of sciences and arts was in full swing in Europe. Galileo published <em>The Assayer</em>, in which he agreed with Johannes Kepler that Aristotle was wrong, that Planet Earth is not the center of the universe; this idea was often perceived as a threat to traditional belief and provoked the church’s attempts to silence him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th century</td>
<td>Minority Christian groups, oppressed and persecuted by the majority, migrated, some to the New World, in search of religious freedom and prosperity. Eventually a new nation was founded in North America with a fundamental principle of separation of church and state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>The scientist Charles Darwin published <em>The Origin of Species</em>, with revolutionizing concepts such as survival of the fittest and evolution of species; for many, his ideas seemed to threaten the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis and therefore aroused furious dissension. A serious divide between science and religion existed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>Ecumenism, the idea that all churches, especially Christian churches, could be united, was not a new idea, but it became increasingly influential among some Christians. Others saw ecumenism as a relaxation of important principles and beliefs, and it aroused fierce resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>In some countries, such as Ireland, religious and political differences overlapped and led to conflict and terrorist tactics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st century</td>
<td>Christianity in its various forms is the dominant religion throughout the Americas, Europe, and parts of southern Africa. This religious belief is actively opposed by the radical Jihadist movement that aims to eliminate Christianity and replace it worldwide with its own Jihadist interpretation of Islam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st century</td>
<td>Another source of dissent from the dominant belief in mainly Christian regions comes from those who do not follow an established religion. Atheists and agnostics often seek through various means to eliminate expressions of religious beliefs from the public sphere, including public schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handout 3  p. 1

Christian Belief and Worship

The term Christianity is a broad umbrella for many diverse groups, but they all have some commonalities:

**Monotheism.** Christians believe that there is one God. For most Christians, in a mysterious way, this deity includes creator (Father), redeemer (Jesus), and inspirer (Holy Spirit).

**Creation.** Christians believe that God created the universe—that the world as we know it is not a product of a cosmic coincidence or accident. Some insist on a literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis; most see the creation accounts as metaphorical or allegorical.

**Moral Code.** For Christians, as for Jews, the Ten Commandments related in the Book of Exodus form an essential set of required behaviors. Jesus’ injunction to love God and neighbor is also central, although interpreted in diverse ways.

**Death.** Christians believe in life after death. One basis for this is the statement ascribed to Jesus speaking to one of the men crucified alongside him, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43).

**Day of Worship.** Most Christians view Sunday as the primary day of worship.

**Holy Days.** The most important holy days for Christians are Easter, the commemoration of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (in March or April), and Christmas, the memorial of his birth (in December).

**Worship.** Sunday worship services generally include songs by the congregation and/or choir; Scripture reading(s); speeches, sermons, or testimony; collection of offerings; often communion services.

**Baptism.** The use of water as a sign of both cleansing and induction into the community is important for Christians. Some practice infant baptism; others reserve baptism for adolescence or even adulthood. For those who emphasize infant baptism, a later ritual of confirmation (similar in purpose to the Jewish bar mitzvah and bas mitzvah) signifies commitment.

**Other Rites.** For Christians, weddings and funerals are religious events, usually including a priest, minister, or other official as a witness or leader.

**Authority.** The pope, in Rome, is the most important religious leader for Roman Catholics; the Archbishop of Canterbury is the leader for Anglicans. Other Christian religious groups tend to stress the primacy of individual conscience based on Scripture, logical reason, and even intuition.

**Good and Evil.** In the Christian view, God and creation are good; however, the presence of evil in the world is undeniable. Some see the source of evil personified in the devil (Satan); others see it as embedded in the frailties of individuals and groups. Most (but not all) Christian groups accept the necessity of war in some circumstances.
Lesson 4 (CHRISTIANITY)

Handout 3  P.2

Christian Belief and Worship

Questions for discussion:

Does Christianity play a significant role in the life of your local community?

Has Christianity played a major role in national or international events, or is it primarily a passive bystander?
Directions:

The relationship between science (what we know and what we can do) and religion (what we believe and how we should behave) invites discussion and has occasionally led to crises, even conflict. Here is a well-known case. Read the information below and answer the questions.

Science by its very nature depends on observable data, and what people observe depends on their environment and the tools available to them. In Aristotle’s time (fourth century BCE), it made perfect sense to believe in an Earth-centric universe. Many centuries later, the telescope and other tools Aristotle could not have imagined challenged his view. As the Western world entered the Renaissance, science as we know it today began to develop. The Prussian astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) developed his heliocentric theory, and both Pope Clement VII and several cardinals expressed interest in it.

However, church authorities are seldom young, and elderly people often see new ideas as troubling, even threatening. The Catholic Church by the 17th century still adhered to Aristotle’s view of the universe. An Italian scientist named Galileo (1564–1642) was fascinated with astronomy and concluded, based on observations and the tools available to him, that Aristotle’s theory was not accurate—that the universe is heliocentric, that Copernicus was correct.

Church authorities were not happy with Galileo. He was questioned, silenced, and accused of heresy; he held his peace for seven years. When a friend of his became Pope Urban VIII, he was allowed to resume his research and to publish as long as his work was “objective.” But his 1632 work Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems went too far. He was arrested, convicted of heresy, threatened with torture, and placed under house arrest until his death. The church wanted Galileo to believe and teach what was contrary to his own careful scientific observations—virtually an impossibility for a true scientist.

1. What would have motivated church officials to militate against Galileo’s theories?

2. Galileo seems to have been a devout Catholic. How might the church’s actions have affected him?

3. How might the church’s actions have affected other scientists at the time?

4. How might Galileo’s experiences have affected later generations of scientists?

In September 2015, in a historic intersection of religion and politics, Pope Francis, the worldwide head of the Roman Catholic Church, visited the United States. In major cities, people of many denominations thronged the streets for a chance to see and hear a man who in many ways reflects Christianity as a whole, regardless of differences in belief and practice. In his speech to a joint session of Congress, Pope Francis stood as both a religious leader and an educated citizen of the world. Read the following excerpts, and answer the questions that follow.

“All of us are deeply aware of, and deeply worried about, the disturbing social and political situation of the world today. Our world is increasingly a place of violent conflict, hatred, and brutal atrocities, committed even in the name of God and of religion. We know that no religion is immune from forms of individual delusion or ideological extremism. This means that we must be especially attentive to every form of fundamentalism, whether religious or of any other kind. A delicate balance is required to combat violence perpetrated in the name of a religion, an ideology, or an economic system, while also safeguarding religious freedom…. To imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their place. That is something which you, as a people, reject….

“In this land, the various religious denominations have greatly contributed to building and strengthening society. It is important that today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard, for it is a voice of fraternity and love, which tries to bring out the best in each person and in society. Such cooperation is a powerful resource in the battle to eliminate new global forms of slavery, born of grave injustices which can be overcome only through new policies and new forms of social consensus…. "

“Our world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War. This presents us with great challenges and many hard decisions. On this continent, too, thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way that is always humane, just and fraternal. We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays to discard whatever proves to be troublesome. Let us remember the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew7:12)....

“The Golden Rule also reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every state of its development.

“This conviction has led me, from the beginning of my ministry, to advocate levels for the global abolition of the death penalty. I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes....
“Being at the service of dialogue and peace also means being truly determined to minimize and, in the long term, to end the many armed conflicts throughout the world. Here we have to ask ourselves: Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money….”

1. Not all members of Congress were pleased with the invitation for the pope to address that body, and some declined to attend. What reasons might they have had for this decision?

2. What are the issues that concern the pope? What does he want Christians to do about these issues? Was the pope’s speech essentially positive or generally negative?

3. How do you think the audience responded? To what extent does the speech reflect the role of Christian churches in world history and in current events? Include specific evidence in your answer. Does this have any implications for your own life?
Optional: Interview a practitioner of a religion or belief system different from your own, and write an essay in which you discuss similarities and differences.

Optional: Research and report on the role religion plays or has played in political debates and discussions, for example in events leading up to the 2016 presidential election in the United States.
Islam

**Enduring Understandings**

- Islam is a monotheistic faith that shares not only the same God, but also many beliefs and practices with its predecessors Christianity and Judaism.

- Muhammad is considered by Muslims to be the most recent in a long line of prophets of God, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

- The Five Pillars of Islam and the Six Principles are the foundations of the faith and are outlined in the sacred text of the Koran as well as in the Hadith, a collection of reported sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

- Islamic culture has contributed greatly to the worlds of science, medicine, and art.

**Essential Questions**

- Who is the Prophet of Islam, where was Islam founded, and how did it initially spread?

- What is the sacred text of Islam and what major beliefs and practices does it contain?

- What similarities exist among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism?

- How did Islamic culture affect art, medicine, and science during the age of Empire?

**Notes to the Teacher**

**Overview of Islam**

The foundational belief in Islam is that there is only one God, Allah, the same God as the God of Abraham. Muhammad is his prophet. Islam was founded in Mecca (in present-day Saudi Arabia), the hometown of the Prophet Muhammad. At the time, that region of Arabia was largely polytheistic, and Allah, the monotheistic God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus was one of many gods worshipped in Mecca.

According to Islam, the Prophet, who was not able to read, was told to recite what the Angel Gabriel told him. His wife, Khadija, recorded what would later become the text of the Koran. The Koran, along with the recorded sayings and actions of Muhammad, called the Hadith, are the foundation of the religion of Islam. With the support and protection of his prominent wife and his Uncle Abu Talib, the chief of the powerful Quraish clan, Muhammad soon attracted followers.

Muhammad and the early believers were protected for a time in Mecca because of the Prophet’s relatives, but after the deaths of both Khadija and Abu Talib, Muhammad and his followers were threatened and chose to flee. In 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers fled to another oasis city, Medina. The year of the Hijra, or flight, is marked as the first year in the Muslim calendar. Away from the polytheistic sects of Mecca, practitioners of Islam were free to spread the word, and Muhammad continued to receive divine revelations. The conflict with the Meccans continued until finally the city fell; followers of Islam took over the city and destroyed images of other gods to focus faith in one God, Allah.
Another significant event in early Islamic history is known as the Night Journey. According to Islam, while Muhammad was sleeping, the Angel Gabriel took him on a journey from the Ka’aba in Mecca to the Farthest Mosque (many believe this to be in Jerusalem) where he met and prayed with Abraham, Moses, and Jesus before being led by Gabriel to Paradise and Hell. During this Ascension, Muhammad came face to face with God, before returning to Earth and continuing to spread the Islamic faith. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the only prophet to visit Paradise and Hell while still living.

Those who practiced polytheism (like the Quraish in Mecca) were frequently converted by force. Those who practiced Christianity and Judaism were left alone initially, since they were believers in the one true God. In later years, after the death of Muhammad, conversion by intimidation, economic sanction, or violence was practiced more often and included Jews and Christians. This led to the rapid spread and dissemination of the Islamic faith, starting in 700 CE.

After the death of Muhammad, there was disagreement as to who should lead the growing faith. Muhammad did not name a successor, and two groups, the Sunnis and the Shiites, emerged in conflict over who should be the new leader (caliph). The Sunnis believed the caliph should be determined by consensus and thus elected three successive leaders: Abu Bakr (Muhammad’s best friend), Umar, and Uthman. The Shiites believed that only a blood relative of Muhammad had the right to leadership. They chose Ali, Muhammad’s closest male relative, to be caliph. Ali is considered by Sunnis to be the fourth caliph, while to the Shiites he is the first legitimate spiritual leader, after Muhammad. All four are referred to as the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Sunnis make up more than 80 percent of the Muslim population today. The two sects practice their faith differently, but both consider the Koran to be of divine origin.

Here are some resources to study the history of Islam further:

http://www.islamicity.org/

Summary of basic beliefs and practices:

The Five Pillars of Islam are five practices that must be followed by all Muslims as a demonstration of faith: Faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage.

There are also Six Principles by which all Muslims must live:

1. Belief in the Oneness of God
2. Belief in the Angels of God
3. Belief in the Books of God
4. Belief in the Prophets or Messengers of God
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment
6. Belief in the Divine Decree

For a fuller explanation of beliefs and practices in Islam, visit http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/muslims/beliefs.html
Lesson 5 (ISLAM)

Organization of the lesson

In Part 1 of this lesson, students will learn about the basic tenets of Islam by first learning about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and then looking at the Five Pillars of Islam and the Six Principles. The focus of this part is to look at the shared beliefs and similarities with other monotheistic faiths. Note that this lesson may require the reservation of a class set of laptops or tablets, or the prior reservation of the computer lab for all days. If you have access to a virtual classroom, or other learning management system, or a classroom drive, Cloud, or Dropbox, create a folder for each day, including all of the handouts in order, or all of the URL links for each handout, if you prefer that the students complete the assignments on paper.

This lesson is set up so that students’ prior knowledge of Judaism and Christianity can be used to better understand Islam. If this is a stand-alone lesson and these religions have not been covered yet in class, make sure you have enough prior knowledge to debunk myths and avoid prejudice by reviewing the websites provided for the students for research before you begin the lesson. The answer sheet will also provide guidance.

Part 2 demonstrates the influence of the spread of Islam on cultural art and artifacts, highlighting the creativity and cultural stewardship of Islam. Queens College of the City University of New York has an excellent and easily accessible online collection called “Arts of the Islamic World” at http://artsoftheislamicworld.qc.cuny.edu/lessons.html. If you have time and wish to delve further into this subject, their lesson plans are available at http://artsoftheislamicworld.qc.cuny.edu/lessons.html. It would also be useful to prepare by reading “The Nature of Islamic Art” at https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/orna/hd_orna.htm.

Part 3 of the lesson concerns the Islamic Empires and Islamic political organizations, as well as Islamic terrorist organizations, which are often confused with the religion of Islam. No matter how many stories are written explaining the fallacy behind this comparison, this is a common mistake in media today. Part of the reason for this false connection is the idea that there is no necessary separation of church and state in many Muslim countries. But the behaviors of different Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Indonesia for example) are as diverse as their constitutions, demographics, and natural resources. In fact, the tenets of Islam and those of the Islamic State are vastly different concepts. The purpose of Part 3 is twofold: The first is to introduce students to Islamic cultural diversity and to point out the differences between Islam and the Islamic State. A handout provides a general overview of the Islamic Empire and guides students to study a map, read an article, and watch a clip from the episode “Apocalypse” from The Story of God in order to respond to “stop and think” and “stop and talk” questions. Depending on the class, this can be done independently and then discussed as a group, in small groups, or in pairs. If you prefer, send your students to the appropriate chapter of your world history textbook instead of having them do the online reading.

If you wish to expand your discussion of propaganda, the University of Rhode Island’s Media Literacy Lab has a website called Mind Over Media which has helpful resources. It is located at http://propaganda.mediaeducationlab.com/.

Part 4 is designed to help students overcome the Eurocentric view that all intellectual and scientific knowledge is a product of Western thought. Students look at two brief clips from The Story of God, one showing the Islamic view of creation and the other a medieval Cairo hospital where medicine was “cutting
edge.” Students research a variety of topics on Islamic science and medicine and present reports on their findings.

Finally, in Part 5, students work together to develop topics for a summative essay, which they write according to your standard practice for composition.

A note on language

In the various readings and on different websites, students will probably see various spellings of Arabic words. There are multiple spellings of Muhammad’s name, for example; the Koran is often spelled Qur’an. That is because in Arabic, the consonants are written and the words do not have vowels. When these words were transliterated into English, the English speaker filled in the vowels as he or she heard them. A further complication is the fact that there are slightly different pronunciations of Arabic in various parts of the Islamic world. Students will sometimes see the parenthetical abbreviation “(p.b.u.h)” after the name of the Prophet. This stands for “Peace be upon him.” There may be similar patterns that student will come across. Encourage them to investigate further.

Duration of the Lesson

Three to five class periods

Assessments

Part 1

**Handout 1: Islam: Foundations of Faith K-W-L**

**Handout 2: The Life of the Prophet**

**Handout 3: The Five Pillars and Six Principles of Islam**

Class discussion

Part 2

Student sketches and presentations

Part 3

**Handout 4: Islam and Empire**

Part 4

Student reports

Part 5

Essay suggestions

Completed essay
Materials

Part 1
Computers or tablets with Internet access. One per student is ideal, though students can work in pairs.

**Handouts 1–3**, one copy for each student

Part 2
Computers or tablets with Internet access
Drawing supplies

Part 3
Computers or tablets with Internet access—one per student or one per pair of students
Headphones if desired

**Handout 4**
Access to video of The Story of God: “Apocalypse”

Part 4
Computers or tablets with Internet access

Part 5
Sticky notes

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**Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson**

**CCSS.RH.9-10.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**CCSS.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.RH.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**CCSS.WHST.9-10.10**
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (as single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Procedure

Part 1: An Introduction to Islam

1. Explain to students that they are going to do some research to find out facts about Islam, the second largest religion on Earth, the religion followed by more than 1.6 billion people. Tell them that they are going to begin by checking what they already know about this religion. Distribute **Handout 1: Islam: Foundations of Faith** K-W-L (Know, Want to Know, Learned) to students to activate prior knowledge. It should not take more than five minutes for them to complete the K column and post or write questions in the W column. Then invite students to add questions to the W column throughout the lesson.

2. Distribute the laptops/tablets if necessary. Distribute **Handout 2: The Life of the Prophet**. Instruct students to open both cited websites in two tabs so they can toggle back and forth to complete the timeline. Model the first date entry “570: Muhammad is born” and help them to complete the blanks. (The answer sheet is provided for you after **Handout 2**.) Allow time for students to glean the necessary information from the websites and complete the handout. Then discuss what they have found, to be sure that student answers are clear and accurate.

3. Ask students what obligations the religious people they know seem to have. (Examples: Prayer, including attending church or synagogue on specific days; giving to charity; behaving well toward other people; some may mention the Ten Commandments.) Explain that Muslims have a set of obligations called the Five Pillars. Distribute **Handout 3: The Five Pillars and Six Principles of Islam**. Give students time to research the answers and then discuss the answers. Point out that “Islam” means “submission” and “Muslim” means “one who submits.” Be sure that they understand the terms mosque, shahada, hajj, and Ramadan. Note that an answer sheet (with additional information on Judaism and Christianity) follows the handout.

4. Ask students if they see any commonalities between Islam and the other Abrahamic faiths. (Christians and Jews also believe in a monotheistic God, although most Christians believe that there are three persons in one God; Christians and Jews also have specific times for prayer, like holy days; Lent is a time for fasting for Christians and Yom Kippur for Jews; there are many Christian and Jewish charities and charitable individuals, some of whom tithe; the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is a pilgrimage site for Jews and there are many Christian sites for pilgrimages, such as Bethlehem, Lourdes, and Fatima.) Note that an answer sheet with additional information for you follows the handout.

5. Explain to students that Morgan Freeman began The Story of God series after visiting Hagia Sophia, a church in Istanbul, which had been used for a while as a mosque. He asked the guide if the murals of the Biblical scenes and prophets had been covered up when it was under Muslim control. He was surprised to hear that they were not, that Muslims accept the Biblical prophets and stories as part of their religion. Ask students to think about these questions:

- Why, when there are so many similarities among these three religions, have some Westerners historically viewed Islam as exotic?

- Why is Islam considered a Middle Eastern religion when Christianity and Judaism were both founded in the same region and Muslims can be found around the world? (Answers will vary.)
Lesson 5

Journeys in Film: The Story of God

Part 2: Islamic Art

1. Point out to students that Islam as a religion has its home in many diverse cultures. Just as British, Mexican, and Ghanaian Christians wear different clothes, eat different foods, speak different languages, and produce different art and music from one another, so do Muslims in countries where their religion is the majority. Tell students that in this next activity they are going to look at a variety of examples of Islamic artifacts that come from many regions of the Islamic world. If necessary, define “artifact” as an object made by a human being, often with cultural significance.

2. Tell students that in spite of the different cultures in which these artifacts were made, there are four major themes in Islamic art that keep reappearing: calligraphy (elegant writing used as decoration); vegetal patterns (plants); geometric patterns; and figural representation of humans and animals. The last category is less frequent because of religious proscriptions, but figural representations exist in almost every culture.

3. Have students access the City University of New York’s collection of Islamic art at http://artsoftheislamicworld.qc.cuny.edu/#. Direct students to click on the thumbnails to view many pieces; this gives them the opportunity to see all the different cultural artifacts related to Islam in the collection. Explain that when they click on one, a pop-up will provide extensive information about the date of the object, where it came from, and what it is.

4. Ask each of the students to select two objects that appeal to them, but that are very different from each other. For each object have the students
   - draw sketches of two different art forms for the era.
   - label the sketches with information about the era and location in which the object was made.
   - draw conclusions about the values of the culture or era based on these observations.

5. Have students present their sketches to the class or place them on the wall and do a gallery walk. Be sure that students see distinctions as well as commonalities among the artifacts and the eras.

Part 3: Islam and Islamic Empires

1. Distribute computers/tablets and Handout 4: Islam and Empire. Tell your students to read the first paragraphs and view the flash map of Islamic Empires. Then have them stop after they have completed the first “Stop and think” question.

2. After students have completed the first “Stop and think” question about the map, briefly discuss their answers. This discussion can go a number of ways and is a great opportunity for extension. Here is a chance to talk about the accuracy of the modern era portion of the map where countries are highlighted as being “Christian” even though they are secular nations. Point out that there is a difference between Islam the religion and the Islamic Empires by which the faith was sometimes spread violently, just as there is a difference between Christianity and the Christians who persecuted nonbelievers and burned heretics during the Inquisition.
3. Have students continue with the next two sections of the handout, stopping to discuss their answers. Be sure that students understand the concept of the caliphate and stress how it evolved into a secular entity, combining military and political roles but not religious leadership.

4. Write the word “jihad” on the board and explain that this word has many meanings. Explain that in its original meaning, it could be translated as “struggle” or “striving,” and could mean either a struggle to defend Islam or the striving to be a good Muslim, to conquer one’s own sinful tendencies. Today various radical groups use the word to mean “holy war”; they are often referred to in the press as “jihadists” or “Islamists.”

5. Show the section of the episode “Apocalypse” in *The Story of God* in which Morgan Freeman interviews Maajid Nawaz, a former jihadist. After students have viewed the episode and answered the last question on the handout, ask them why Nawaz left home to join the jihadists. (He and his friends experienced discrimination and threats at home in England.) What caused him to change his mind about jihad? (During his years in jail, he thought about how awful life would be if the jihadists won.) What does he do now? (He develops propaganda to counter the recruiting propaganda put out on social media by ISIS and other groups.) This would also be a good time to discuss the concept of propaganda with your students.

**Part 4: Islamic Science**

1. Show the clip from the episode “Creation” in *The Story of God* in which Morgan Freeman says, in considering the relationship between Islam and science, “Scholars in Cairo kept science alive while Europe lumbered through the Dark Ages.” Ask students: What was the Muslim understanding of the beginnings of the universe? How close is it to that of modern science?

2. Tell students that many advances in astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, navigation, and medicine were in fact made during the Golden Age of science in the Islamic world, which stretched from Spain to China. For example, modern students are familiar with algebra, the name of which comes from Arabic (al-jabr). “Arabic” numerals, brought back from North Africa by Fibonacci, make math much simpler than it was in Roman times.

3. Show the clip from the episode “The Power of Miracles” in *The Story of God* in which Morgan Freeman visits an 800-year-old hospital in Cairo. Why does Morgan Freeman call medieval Muslim medicine “cutting edge”? Assign student groups to research and report on the following topics:

   - The world’s first university, Al-Qarawiyyin, in Fez, Morocco
   - The preservation of texts from ancient Greece, including those of Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato
   - The Ahmad ibn Tulun hospital in Cairo
   - Al-Zahrawi, the “father of surgery”
   - Ibn al-Nafis and pulmonary circulation
   - The use of the smallpox vaccine in 17th-century Turkey

4. Have students continue with the next two sections of the handout, stopping to discuss their answers. Be sure that students understand the concept of the caliphate and stress how it evolved into a secular entity, combining military and political roles but not religious leadership.
Lesson 5 (ISLAM)

- The invention of soap
- Taqi al-Din and astronomy
- Jabir ibn Hayyan, the founder of modern chemistry
- Abbas ibn Firnas and the first parachute
- The library of Tripoli
- The Muslim Agricultural Revolution

5. When students have finished their research, have them present their findings orally, with a PowerPoint presentation or on posters for display.

Part 5: Synthesis

1. Give students five large sticky notes each and direct them to write two or three sentences on each one about something that they learned about Islam during this lesson.

2. Put students in groups of four. Have them share their sticky notes with each other as a quick review of the topics covered.

3. Ask each group to come up with a good topic for an essay that would pull together some of the information on the sticky notes in their group.

4. Call on each group and write their essay topic on the board. As a class, evaluate the topics as (a) too narrow, (b) too broad, or (c) just right for a two- or three-page essay (or whatever length you wish to assign).

5. Follow your usual procedure for drafting, revising, proofreading, peer editing, etc.
### Handout 1

#### Islam: Foundations of Faith K-W-L

**Directions:**

1. Complete the “Know” column. If you do not know about a particular topic related to Islam, put a question mark or draw a questioning emoticon in that space.

2. In the “Want to Learn” column, write a question for each question mark or questioning emoticon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Want to Learn</th>
<th>What I Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Islam polytheistic or monotheistic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is its greatest prophet?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is its sacred text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What global region does it come from?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are its basic practices and beliefs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Follow-up:**

1. Throughout class, add your questions as they come up to the “Want to Learn” column.

2. Complete the “What I Learned” column at the end of class. Highlight or circle any unanswered questions.
**Lesson 5 (ISLAM)**

**Handout 2 • P. 1**

The Life of the Prophet

**Directions:**

*Complete the timeline below using the following two resources:*

http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/timeline_flash.shtml


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 570  | Muhammad is born in the city of __________________________.  
      | The tribe he is born into is called the ______________________.  
      | What was the responsibility of the tribe in the city? |
| 575  | Muhammad's mother, Amina, dies. Muhammad is delivered into the care of his grandfather. |
| 578  | Muhammad's grandfather dies. Muhammad is now under that care of his uncle, named ______________.  
      | What effect might all of this early loss of family have on young Muhammad? What evidence is there in the Koran? Provide a quote: |
| 580–594 | Muhammad starts traveling with his uncle and learning to be a merchant, like his uncle.  
         | What reputation does he gain? |
### Handout 2 - P.2

**Lesson 5 (ISLAM)**

**The Life of the Prophet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 594–609 | **Muhammad starts working for ________________________________, a wealthy tradeswoman.**  
  They eventually get married.  
  Who proposed to whom? ________________________________  
  What happens to the business? |

  Where did Muhammad first receive his Revelations, and through whom?  
  Who supported him? Provide a quote as evidence.  
### Handout 2 - P.3

**The Life of the Prophet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>circa 620</strong></td>
<td><strong>Around 10 years after the first Revelation, Muhammad’s wife and uncle die.</strong> After a very difficult year, Muhammad experiences the <strong>Night Journey and the Ascension</strong>. Read the description of this on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s site here: <a href="http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam">http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam</a>. What is the significance of Jerusalem in this story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td><strong>Hijra.</strong> This year is also year one (0-1) of the Muslim calendar. Looking at both timelines, describe the Hijra in terms of the five w’s (who, what, where, when, and why). Why do you think the Muslims reset the calendar based on this event, rather than any other amazing occurrence (including the Prophet’s birth)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>625–28</td>
<td><strong>Retaking Mecca.</strong> What did the Muslims do once they had control of Mecca?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Lesson 5 (ISLAM)**

**Journeys in Film: The Story of God**

**Handout 2 - P.3**

**The Life of the Prophet**

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The Life of the Prophet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>630–632</td>
<td>The Prophet’s final years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where did the Prophet Muhammad spend his final years? Why do you think that is? What was the pilgrimage and where did he go?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**After the Prophet’s Death**


**Final thought:** Knowing the story of the Prophet Muhammad, what are the three most important cities in Islam? What happened in each?

1. 

2. 

3.
The Life of the Prophet

Directions:

Complete the timeline below using the following two resources:

http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/timeline_flash.shtml


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>570</td>
<td>Muhammad is born in the city of Mecca. The tribe he is born into is called the Quraish. What was the responsibility of the tribe in the city? Trade, business, controlling trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>575</td>
<td>Muhammad’s mother, Amina, dies. Muhammad is delivered into the care of his grandfather.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 578   | Muhammad’s grandfather dies. Muhammad is now under the care of his uncle, named Abu Talib. What effect might all of this early loss of family have on young Muhammad? What evidence is there in the Koran? Provide a quote:

> Answers will vary. One quote given is “Did God not find you an Orphan and give you shelter and care? And found you wandering, and give you guidance. And he found you in need, and made you independent.” (XCIII, 6–8) |
| 580–594 | Muhammad starts traveling with his uncle and learning to be a merchant, like his uncle. What reputation does he gain? El-Amin, “The one you can trust.” |
### The Life of the Prophet

#### Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Where did Muhammad first receive his Revelations, and through whom?

Mt. Hira, near Mecca, from the Archangel Gabriel (Jibra’il).

Who supported him? Provide a quote as evidence.

His wife and uncle.

“Initially overwhelmed by the significance of what was being revealed to him, Muhammad found unflinching support in his wife.”


The Quraish tribe and Meccan merchants, because they thought trade would be negatively affected.

“They believed [trade] was protected by the pagan gods [and] would suffer.”

| Circa 620  | Around 10 years after the first Revelation, Muhammad’s wife and uncle die. After a very difficult year, Muhammad experiences the Night Journey and the Ascension. Read the description of this on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s site here: [http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam](http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam)

What is the significance of Jerusalem in this story? Jerusalem is the site of the Farthest Mosque.

| 622 CE, Year 1 of the Muslim Calendar | Hijra. This year is also year one (or 0-1) of the Muslim calendar. Looking at both timelines, describe the Hijra in terms of the five w’s (who, what, where, when, and why).

Who: Muhammad and his followers
What: Evacuated the city of Mecca and emigrated to Yathrib, which is renamed.
Where: From Mecca to Medina (Yathrib)
When: 622
Why: They were forced to flee because Islam was considered a threat to the city and Muhammad no longer had the protection of his wife and uncle. 

Lesson 5 (ISLAM)

Handout 2 • P.7
ANSWER SHEET

The Life of the Prophet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>625–28</td>
<td>Retaking Mecca. What did the Muslims do once they had control of Mecca? Destroyed all the idols in the Ka’aba and made the city Muslim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>630–632</td>
<td>The Prophet’s final years. Where did the Prophet Muhammad spend his final years? Why do you think that is? What was the pilgrimage and where did he go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muhammad spent his final years in Medina, probably because he felt safe there surrounded by his followers. Answers here will vary; sadness over the battles and the loss of his wife and family are acceptable answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>After the Prophet’s Death</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read that section of <a href="http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam">http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-prophet-muhammad-and-the-origins-of-islam</a> and explain the split between Sunnis and Shiites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Sunnis believed that Muhammad’s successor should be chosen by consensus, whereas the Shiites believed that the leader or caliph should be someone related to Muhammad, his nephew Ali. The Sunnis chose the first three leaders or caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, and Ali finally became the fourth caliph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Muslim world is still divided into Sunnis and Shiites, who worship differently. Sunnis are in the majority through most of the Muslim world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final thought: Knowing the story of the Prophet Muhammad, what are the three most important cities in Islam? What happened in each?

1. Mecca, birth of Muhammad, Divine Revelations
2. Medina, City of the Prophet, death of Muhammad
3. Jerusalem, Site of the Farthest Mosque, Night Journey
The Five Pillars and the Six Principles of Islam

Directions:

The Five Pillars of Islam are basic obligations of all practicing Muslims which they are responsible for upholding. Using the links at http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/faithpillars.html, write a brief description of each pillar in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith  (Shahada)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prayer  (Salat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charity  (Zakat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fasting  (Sawm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilgrimage  (Hajj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six Major Principles of Islam

1. Belief that there is only one God
2. Belief in Angels
3. Belief in the Books of God, including the Koran, the Torah, and the Gospels
4. Belief in the Prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad
5. Belief that there will be a Day of Judgment
6. Belief that everything is the result of God’s will

The two other Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Christianity, also have certain sets of beliefs and obligations for their followers. Do you see any commonalities between Islam and these other faiths? If so, list them below:
### The Five Pillars and the Six Principles of Islam

*Note to the teacher: Students were not asked to define the practices in Christianity and Judaism; the second and third columns are included below to assist you in leading discussions about the similarities and differences among and between the religions.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLAM</th>
<th>CHRISTIANITY</th>
<th>JUDAISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Shahada says, “There is no god except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” Muslims repeat this statement many times a day during their prayers. If someone wants to become a Muslim, saying this and meaning it is an entry into Islam. | Some Christians believe that they must declare that they take Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. | Key word: Shema
In the Shema, there is a foundational declaration of faith that there is one God and this is also repeated many times a day. |
| **Prayer (Salat)**
Muslims pray five times a day: at dawn, noon, late afternoon, sunset, and night. They perform ablutions before prayer, washing the hands, face, arms, and feet. One may pray alone or in a group, including in a mosque. The Friday noon prayer is special to Muslims and is done in a mosque if possible. Muslims face toward the city of Mecca during prayer. | How often do Christians pray?
Saying prayers at night and in the morning is common among Christians, as well as at meal times. Some members of the faith go to church mid-morning and mid-evening. They often face a cross to pray. | How often do Jews pray?
Jews are instructed to pray three times a day, in the morning, in the afternoon, and at nightfall. |
The Five Pillars and the Six Principles of Islam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ISLAM</strong></th>
<th><strong>CHRISTIANITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>JUDAISM</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fasting (*Sawm*) | Describe Lent:  
Lent is different from *Sawm*, and not all Christians celebrate it. In this case, something is given up for 40 days. For some it might be certain foods; practicing Catholics do not eat meat on Fridays in Lent. (Formerly, this abstinence from meat was required every Friday and on certain holy days as well.) The theme of sacrifice is consistent, though. | Describe Yom Kippur:  
The most important day of the Jewish year is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Many Jews fast and abstain from other things on this day. |

- Muslims are required to fast from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar. People gather in the evenings for a festive breaking of the fast. When fasting, Muslims refrain from food, liquid, and sexual activity. During Ramadan, Muslims are also supposed to abstain from negative behaviors such as lying, gossip, petty arguments, and negative thoughts or behaviors, including getting angry. Muslims are required to start fasting when they reach puberty, although some younger children may also fast. People who are sick, traveling, menstruating, and pregnant or nursing may break their fast, but may make up the days later in the year. The elderly and people with disabilities are excused from fasting.

- Lent is different from *Sawm*, and not all Christians celebrate it. In this case, something is given up for 40 days. For some it might be certain foods; practicing Catholics do not eat meat on Fridays in Lent. (Formerly, this abstinence from meat was required every Friday and on certain holy days as well.) The theme of sacrifice is consistent, though.
The Five Pillars and the Six Principles of Islam

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<th>JUDAISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrimage (Hajj)</td>
<td>It is part of the Christian tradition to go on a pilgrimage to a holy site, but it is not required.</td>
<td>A journey to the first Temple is encouraged for Jews. That means a trip to the Holy Land, Jerusalem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Muslims are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, located in Saudi Arabia, once in their lifetime if financially and physically able. Mecca is home to the first house of worship of God, the Ka’aba, said to have been built by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. Muslims all over the world face toward the Ka’aba when they pray. All outward symbols of rank and wealth are erased during the pilgrimage, as Muslims from every part of the globe come together for the purpose of worshiping God. Muslims who complete the pilgrimage are referred to as “Hajji” and greeted with great celebration and respect in their communities when they return.</td>
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A. The history of Islam is a complicated subject, because like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is more than just a religion. The history of a faith is also the history of the people who practice that faith. The history of Islam, therefore, is not just the history of Saudi Arabia, where Mecca and Medina are today, but also of Jerusalem, the site of the “Farthest Mosque” in the Night Journey. It is the history of Indonesia, the largest (in population) Muslim country in the world. It is the history of Iran, China, Iraq, Qatar, Morocco, Egypt, Spain, and many more countries that were once part of the great Empires of Islam.

Go to https://cmes.uchicago.edu/page/maps-middle-east. Under the heading “Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires,” click on “Islamic World (ca. 1700).” How would you describe the extent of the Islamic world at that time?

Stop and think: Were the countries of the Islamic Empire covered by the map all culturally similar? Or were they diverse in culture, such as clothes, food, and language? Give an example using your own prior knowledge and the countries highlighted on the map.
B. Islam has often been described as being “spread by the sword” because the people of a conquered nation often converted to Islam. The “sword” refers to the conquering of a region or country; the level (and method) of coercion varied depending on which Islamic Empire was doing the conquering. Early in Islam, “People of the Book” (those who practiced Judaism or Christianity) were allowed to practice their faith freely, and there is no call to convert others in the Koran or Hadith.

However, Muhammad was more than a prophet. He was a powerful political and military leader who capably conquered Mecca and put an end to tribal idolatry (polytheistic idol worship) there. He was followed by other leaders who combined political and military skills to greatly expand Islamic territory. By 1400 the Islamic world stretched from Spain to Indonesia.

Read about the spread of Islam in the article at www.yale.edu/yup/pdf/cim6.pdf.

Stop and think: What were some of the reasons why Islam was able to expand so far?
C. Forced conversions, whether through economic sanctions such as higher taxes or political means such as restricted access to positions of power, or physical means such as the threat of violence, were not perpetrated by the religious leaders of Islam; they were the actions of the political leaders who were ultimately under the direction of the caliph or ruler of the region. The caliph was originally meant to be a successor of Muhammad, inheriting his political power and leadership as well as the role of religious model; the caliph had no divine power (Muhammad had none either) and did not receive revelations (Muhammad was the last prophet). The Four Rightly Guided Caliphs of the early period were examples of this kind of leadership.

At the beginning of the Umayyad Empire, the role of caliph changed to being more of the military and political leader. These were dynasties that passed on stewardships (sometimes through bloodlines), and there were times when several different regions of the world claimed to be led by “the Caliph,” the one who claimed to be a true successor to Muhammad as a religious model but was mostly a political and military leader. Should a religion be held responsible for the actions of an empire that invades and conquers in the name of the religion?

Stop and talk: Find a partner and discuss this question for two minutes. Write down your brief opinions here:

D. Today’s headlines are full of news of the Islamic State, also called ISIS and ISIL. Watch the clip from the episode “Apocalypse” in The Story of God, in which Morgan Freeman interviews a man who was part of a jihadist organization for many years.

Stop and summarize: What do you learn from this interview?