

Teacher's Guide for Calliope: *World Religions*

November 2008

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Getting Ready:

Have students brainstorm the religions with which they are familiar. Encourage them to share any information about religious ceremonies or rituals in which they have participated. As a group write a working definition of religion and inform students that they will refine the definition as they read and study the issue. Post the definition on a bulletin board or black board and "edit" it as students bring up new or additional information.

Vocabulary Development:

This issue contains many words that may be unfamiliar or not precisely defined in students' minds, such as scripture, pilgrim/pilgrimage, cremate/cremation, Sabbath, circumcision, edict, canopy, covenant, contract, ethical, monk, nun, abbot, ritual, prophet, disciple, parable, controversy, eternal, commemorate, unleavened, persecution, catacomb, martyr, console/consolation, revelation. You may wish to discuss these words in a whole class group before reading the issue or as they appear in the articles. You could also divide the class into pairs or groups and have each group check the definition of several words and explain them to the class.

A Need for Understanding:

pp. 2-3, and Sacred Scripture – What Is It? p.4

1. Why does the author argue that understanding and respecting different religions is important?
2. The author writes "Over the centuries, people have done much good in the name of religion. At the same time, however, religious differences have often been the source of division and conflict." Give historical and contemporary examples for each sentence.
3. Give an example of the practice of religious freedom and an example of religious freedom under attack.
4. Define "scripture" in your own words. Give an example of a scripture you know.
5. What specific activities can you take as an individual or a class group to support religious freedom in the world today?

Whole Issue Project:

Have students, individually or in groups, make a table using the author's list of common features of most religions and then organize the material from the issue using the table. They may want to illustrate their table with symbols from the different religions or pictures of places of worship.

Class or individual activities to show understanding.

1. List five interesting facts about each religion discussed.

2. Research one of the gods, sages, or prophets in a specific religion. Write a paragraph about the place and meaning of the god, sage, or prophet in the religion, and draw a picture from the life of the god, sage, or prophet.
3. Read some of the verses or stories in the scripture of a religion of which you are not a member. Summarize the story, explain the religious teaching in the story, and share with the class.
4. Letter Writing/Art: Imagine that you visit a religious celebration or ritual discussed in the issue. Write a letter to your best friend about the religious activity and how you reacted to the experience OR design and write your own postcard showing something that happened to you on your visit.
5. Essay: Choose any two religions. Compare and contrast them using specific examples of how they are practiced in daily life.
6. If students are comfortable with the discussions of religion, ask them to meet in small groups and list the values that are shared by all the religions. Are there any values that are not shared?

Contemporary Applications:

This issue creates an opportunity to listen to men and women of religion share their life of faith and practice. If your community hosts a religious community different from that of the majority of the class, invite a religious leader of that community to share his/her religious understanding with the class.

Alternatively, invite a lawmaker or government official to speak about religious freedom in the world today.