

Title: Comparing Three Religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity

Grade Ranges:

 X K-4

 X 5-8

 9-12

Subject Tag:

SS: World History: Modern World

SS: Social Sciences: Philosophy

Synopsis:

In this jigsaw activity, students research Islam, Christianity, or Judaism and then compare their findings with other groups. Accompanying handout on rituals & holidays and basic beliefs & texts help students organize what they learn. This lesson is most appropriate for upper-elementary and middle school students.

Keywords:

Christianity, Judaism, Islam, religions, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Mahmoud, prophets, Abraham, Moses, Christmas, Easter, Yom Kippur, Mecca, Koran, Bible, Torah, prayers, global studies, human geography, religious studies

Body:

1. Explain to students that three of the largest religions — Islam, Christianity, and Judaism — all have their origins in the Middle East, and while there are some important differences, they also share some similarities.
2. Before class, gather a large selection of books on the different religions from your school library.
3. Assign students to their expert groups. These are the groups in which they do their initial research. There should be two groups of approximately four students working on each religion.
4. Explain to students they are going to become “experts” on one of these religions. They will then teach the other groups about the religion they research.
5. As a group, students are to answer the following questions about their religion. Half of each group should try to find the answers for **Rituals and Holidays** (Handout One) while the other half should try to find the answers for **Basic Beliefs and Texts** (Handout Two).
6. If time allows, take up student work and check it. Re-divide students into new groups. Be sure each new group has at least one (preferably two) people from each expert group.
7. In their new groups, students should first teach each other what they found on their group’s religion. Students should take notes on each religion in their notebooks. Instruct students a quiz will follow this activity.
8. After each “expert” has taught his or her religion, students should answer the **Compare and Contrast** questions in handout three with their group.

9. Give an open-ended quiz. Your quiz might be as simple as the accompanying one, handout four, which consists of three questions worth five points each for a total of 15 points.

Important note: While there are a wide range of good Internet sites on each of these religions, teachers may not want students to conduct their research on this subject over the Internet because of the prolific number of hate group sites.

Related Links:

A Bow of the Head: Religions of the World

<http://library.thinkquest.org/28505/index.html>

This thinkquest site presents an excellent overview of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. To get to the basics, click on “Articles.”

Features:

- Contains special education tips
- Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- Requires Internet access for students to complete

Standards:

NY: 2.1. Social Studies Students will: use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

NYC: A2a. Make an oral presentation of project plans or findings to an appropriate audience. **A5a.** Work with others to complete a task. **A5b.** Show or explain something clearly enough for someone else to be able to do it.

NJ: 6.4. All students will acquire historical understanding of societal ideas and forces throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.

6.5 All students will acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.

CT: 3. Historical Themes Students will apply their understanding of historical periods, issues and trends to examine such historical themes as ideals.

Objectives:

Through this activity students will have a better understanding of the religious traditions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Students will also understand how these religions are similar and different.

Prerequisite Skills:

1. An understanding of how to compare and contrast

Time Required:

Two and a half 45-minute class periods. One class period for research, one for students to teach each other their findings, and time for a short quiz the day after the activity.

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. A large selection of books on Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. These can be found in your school's library.

Procedures:**Assessment Criteria:**

It is important to monitor the student progress throughout this activity to insure students are gathering and teaching each other correct information.

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:**Review Comments:**

Name:

Date:

Rituals and Holidays

Religion:

1. What are the important holidays of this religion?

2. What are the rituals that people perform before or during prayer of this religion?

3. What are other important rituals of this religion?

Name:
Date:

Three Religions Quiz

1. Name and describe a major holiday of Islam.
2. Name and describe a major holiday of Judaism.
3. Name and describe a major holiday of Christianity.

5. How are the holidays of these religions similar? How are they different?

6. The BIG Question: Do you think these religions are more similar or more different from each other? Why?

Name:

Date:

Basic Beliefs and Holy Texts

Religion:

1. Who are the important people in this religion?

2. What is (or are) the main holy books or texts of this religion? When were they written? What is their basic message?

3. What are the basic beliefs and ideas of this religion?

4. What is a follower of this religion called to do in his or her daily life?

Name:

Date:

Rituals and Holidays

Religion:

1. What are the important holidays of this religion?

2. What are the rituals that people perform before or during prayer of this religion?

3. What are other important rituals of this religion?