



UNION

Religious Worlds of New York • Curriculum Development Project

The Academic and Devotional Lens For Studying Religion

Aaron Bible, Greenville Middle School,
Greenville, TN

- Lesson Goal: This lesson plan is designed to be taught at the beginning of the year, to help students understand the difference between the academic and devotional study of religion.

- Lesson Agenda:

1. Vocabulary Activity
2. What does “respect” look, sound, and feel like activity
3. What do you see? Activity with a roof steeple
4. Define: “Religion” activity
5. Define: “Academic” and “Devotional” activity
6. Decorate your lenses activity
7. “The Life of Pi” (Devotional) and Ahmed Fadlad (Secular) Comparison
8. Debriefing Activity

Vocabulary



Define these words using context clues. Do not use a dictionary or look them up

Respect

Devotional

Academic

Established Religion

Lived Religion

What Does Respect look, sound, and feel like?

- Directions:
 1. Work individually to determine what “respect” looks, sounds, and feels like.
 2. Have students share in groups.
 3. Have students share as a whole class.
 4. Make a poster that displays to the class in their own words what “respect” looks, sounds and feels like.

What Do You See???



- Directions:

1. Write down one complete sentence or two, that describes what you think of when you see this image.
2. Share findings with the whole class.
3. Where there any differences in what students wrote down?

What is Religion?



- Directions:

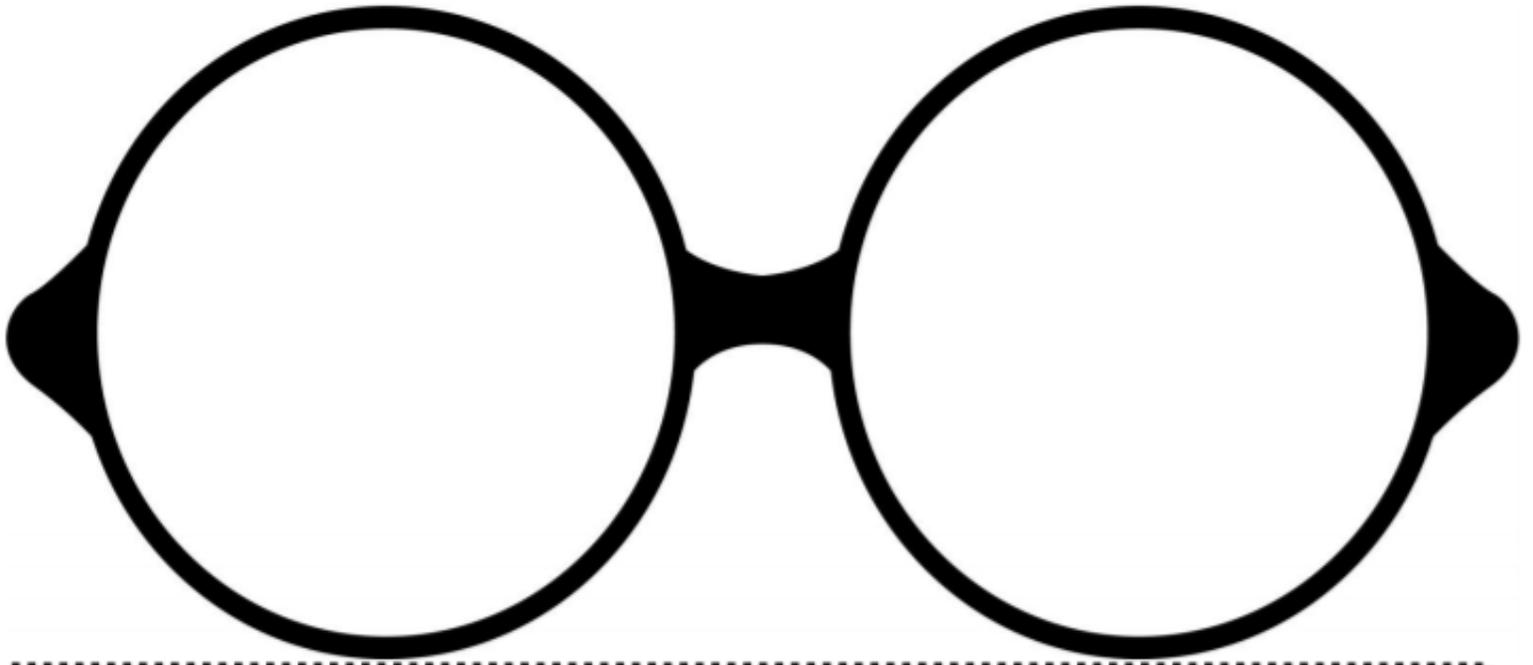
1. Have a class discussion about the image. (Are these religions? What makes them a religion?)
 1. Use this opportunity to introduce ASKR acronym about what good questions look like.
2. Individually, have students write a definition for “religion.”
3. Share definitions in a groups.
4. Share definitions to the whole class.

Academic
VS
DEVOTIONAL
Lenses

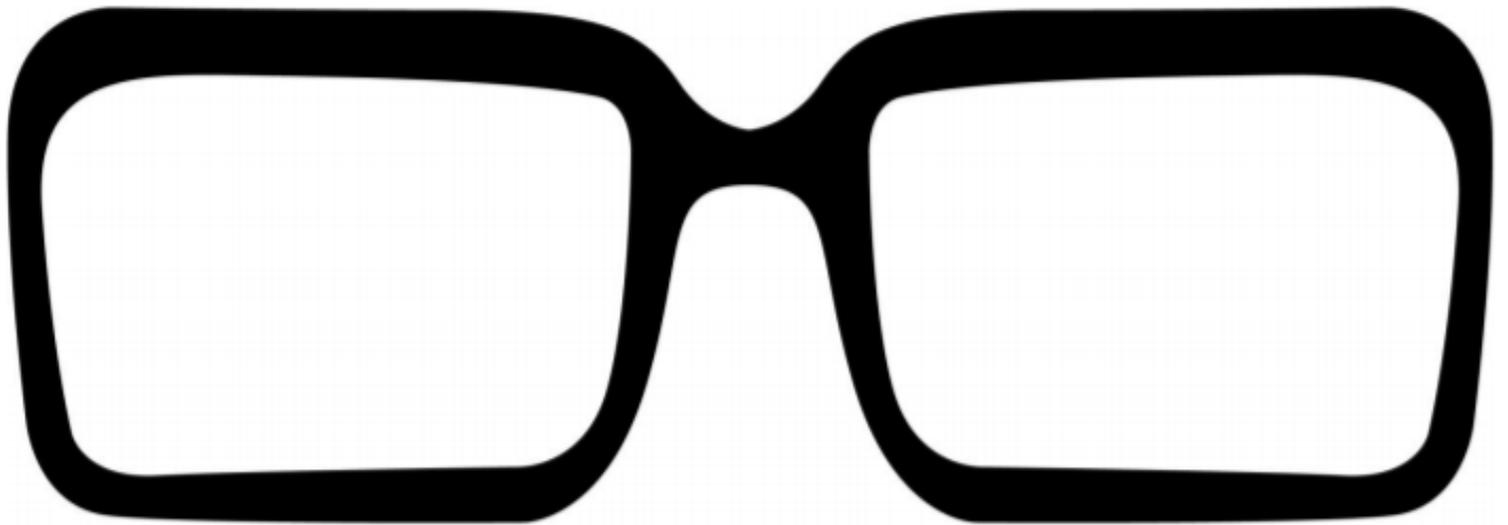
- Directions:

1. In groups (can be determined as teacher sees fit), define what “academic” means.
2. In groups, define what “devotional” means.
3. Use the print out of the lenses for the students to define what each word means and decorate with related themes of each word.
4. Share the decorate lenses with the class.

ACADEMIC LENS



DEVOTIONAL LENS



THE DEVOTIONAL LENS

- Directions:

1. Explain to the students what it means to study a religion “devotionally.”
2. Have students read “The conversion chapter” of *The Life of Pi*.
3. Watch the “Conversion Section” of the movie *The Life of Pi*.
4. Using the “Devotional” lenses that the students decorated, have the students use the lenses to discuss and relate to the character of Pi.
5. Using the “Academic” lenses that the students decorated, have the students use the lenses to discuss and relate to the character of Pi.
6. Have students write a short paragraph that determines if Pi is devotionally or academically studying his religions, or both?

The Academic Lens

- Directions:

1. Explain to the students what it means to study a religion “academically.”
2. Have students read excerpts from “Among the Norse Tribes.”
3. Watch the *Mankind Series: Ahmed Fadlad- Among the Norsemen*
4. Using the “Academic” lenses that the students decorated, have the students use the lenses to discuss and relate to Ahmed Fadlad.
5. Using the “Devotional” lenses that the students decorated, have the students use the lenses to discuss and relate to Ahmed
6. Have students write a short paragraph that determines if Ahmed Fadlad is devotionally or academically studying the Viking Norse tribe, or both?

Determining what the study of religion is... Conclusion Conversation: debriefing and questions

- Directions:

1. Discuss with the students the Why?? What is the difference in “charting” a religion vs studying the “lived religion” and the practice of religion? Why would we study the lived practices of a religion and not just the “charted” facts?
2. Discuss that the “academic” study of a “lived” religion will give a full understanding of the religions that we will be studying and to be respectful of the devotional aspects of all religions.

***For information about
the Religious Worlds of New York
summer institute for teachers,
and more resources to enrich your teaching
on religious diversity, visit
www.religiousworldsnyc.org.***