



**INTERFAITH**  
CENTER OF NEW YORK



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

**UNION**

*Religious Worlds of New York* • *Curriculum Development Project*

## **EXPOSURES: Worldviews Close to Home**

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### **Abstract:**

This project consists of a series of photography opportunities at local religious festivals and celebrations. This course is offered to 6th-8th grade students at a private college prep middle school, as one option for an explore elective that meets two days per week for 9 weeks. This project could be utilized during any of the four quarters, and student who take multiple quarters will have a different set of festivals/events each time. Students from previous quarters may join current students on festival/event photoshoots.

In this Digital Photography elective, students engage with various world religions being LIVED in Wichita neighborhoods by exploring local festivals and celebrations using the camera as the tool for entry into this new and exciting world that means so much to so many.

Choosing site visits that speak to students, each participant will make spontaneous, natural looking photographs of people celebrating their faith and the objects/images that surround them with meaning and context.

Students will become comfortable photographing strangers in public and realizing that it takes time to make a successful photograph. In addition, students will explore neighbors who may or may not follow different faiths than themselves.

The end result will be a new EXPOSURE and a gallery show that invites our Independent Community and the GREATER COMMUNITY of Wichita to engage with the images and the world around them.

### **Students will be required to:**

1. Learn the basics of digital photography.
2. Dialogue with peers regarding the variety of religions present in the community.
3. Research what opportunities exist within the community to attend public religious festival, celebrations, and/or events.

4. Attend class chosen events in order to gather photographic images of sacred objects, food, flora, textiles, surroundings, community members, and practices of city-wide neighbors.
5. Critique and support classmate photographs in effect to understand what makes a great photo.
6. Print images for the final gallery and attend to show pride in personal photographic accomplishments.

## **Sequence and Materials:**

**Process is sequential and follows “EXPOSURES SLIDES” document, pp. 21-66 below.**

**Required materials are collected in “EXPOSURES STUDENT PACKET,” pp. 4-20 below.**

### 1. Poem Analysis with Text Rendering

*A Ritual to Read to Each Other*, by William Stafford

This poem will provide a basis for discussion in which students reflect upon the importance of engaging with others in a respectful and meaningful manner. Students should read and annotate this poem at the beginning of class. Each student in class will be asked to report out one word or phrase that they selected from the poem that was of particular significance to them.

Questions for reflection: Why did we each select the word/words/phrase that we did? What does that choice say about each of us as humans? How might this be relevant when photographing various religious celebrations/festivals?

### 2. Big Questions

Grouping students in threes or fours, pose one question at a time from the “BIG QUESTIONS” page of student packet (below) to the group. Ask students to discuss their answer and be ready to share out. Asking questions is a solid way to guide the group discussions.

### 3. Golden Rules of Photography

Working with the “EXPOSURE SLIDES” (below), guide students through the three basic rules of good photograph: Composition, Focus, and Light.

Print out each image and ask small groups to discuss why these images are a GOOD example of each concept discussed.

#### 4. Photo Categories:

Sacred Objects

Food & Flora

Textiles

Surroundings

Community

Practices

Students will select four of the six categories to concentrate on during the visit to the festival/celebration. Discuss the images on EXPOSURE SLIDES (below) to discuss the slides and how they relate to the six categories.

#### 5. Time to Research:

In small groups, students will research the various opportunities that exist within our community that would give them exposures to the variety of religious groups that currently exist. This will be done through family research, digital research, and personal research.

#### 6. Pre-Event Shoot Discussion

<http://rising.blackstar.com/tread-carefully-when-photographing-religious-events.html>

Students read the article linked above, and discuss how we plan to approach each event. We will then discuss the requirements of the photoshoot. (See EVENT SHOT LIST)

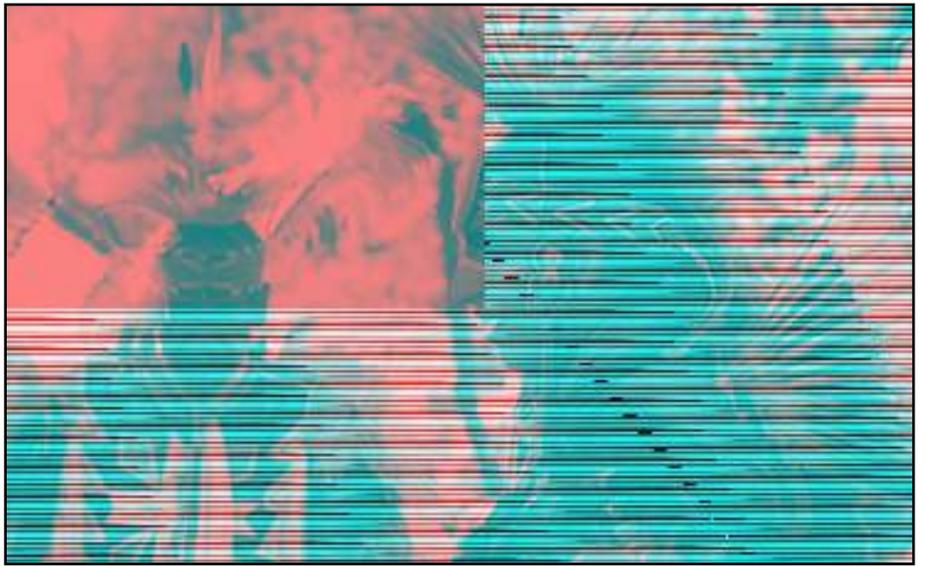
#### 7. Post Event Reflections

After a festival/event photo shoot, students will meet in small group to address the guiding questions on the POST EVENT REFLECTIONS sheet. The teacher role is to facilitate these discussions so that everyone learns and grows from one another.

#### 8. Print it - Post it

Students will print out top two images from each category to share out in class. Each teacher will use the guidelines that meet their school's facilities and equipment in their instructions.

Once images are printed and ready for POST IT time, each student will be given a stack of Post It notes and a pen. Students will wander from photo to photo and leave positive or constructive comments on the back of all the photos. Possible guiding questions: What works about the photo? Where does your eye go at first glance? Do you have a constructive suggestion for how the photo might have been stronger?



**EXPOSURES:**



Worldviews Close to Home

## EXPLORE ABSTRACT:

In this Digital Photography elective, students engage with various world religions being LIVED in Wichita neighborhoods by exploring local festivals and celebrations using the camera as the tool for entry into this new and exciting world that means so much to so many.

Choosing site visits that speak to students, each participant will make spontaneous, natural-looking photographs of people celebrating their faith and the objects/images that surround them with meaning and context.

Students will become comfortable photographing strangers in public and realizing that it takes time to make a successful photograph.

The end result will be a new EXPOSURE and a gallery show that invites our Independent Community and the GREATER COMMUNITY of Wichita to engage with the images and the world around them.



# A RITUAL TO READ TO EACH OTHER

BY WILLIAM E. STAFFORD

Session

1

If you don't know the kind of person I am  
and I don't know the kind of person you are  
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world  
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

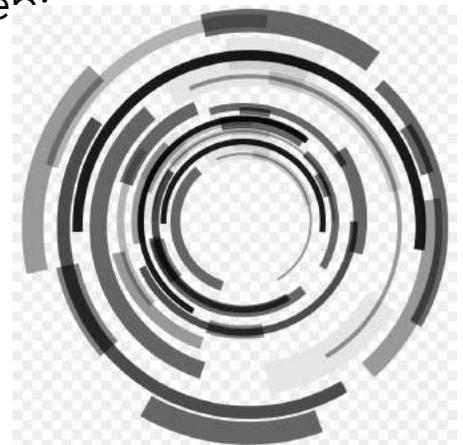
For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,  
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break  
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood  
storming out to play through the broken dike.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,  
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,  
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty  
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,  
a remote important region in all who talk:  
though we could fool each other, we should consider—  
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,  
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep.  
the signals we give — yes or no, or maybe —  
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

What is YOUR lens?  
Circle a couple words or phrase  
that jumps out to you.



# BIG QUESTIONS:



Session  
2

1. What do you know/think/believe about religion?
2. Does religion play a role in your family life? If so, how?
3. How does religion play a role in Wichita? (or any other community where you live or spend time)
4. In what ways do you notice religion in the community?
5. How does religion play a role in the United States as a whole?
6. Do you belong to any organizations that you would call “religious”? If so, what role do they play in your life?
7. What role does the idea of “religion” play in your life? Whether or not you are religious, does your understanding of religion shape your choices, actions, etc?
8. What role do you think religion plays for human beings, in general?

# GOLDEN RULES OF PHOTOGRAPHY:

Session  
3

## COMPOSITION:

- Fill The Frame / Cropping. ...
- Don't Cut Off Limbs. ...
- Understand The **Rule** Of Thirds. ...
- Use Frames. ...
- 5. Make The Most Of Lead In Lines / Shapes. ...
- Simplify – Know Your Focus. ...
- Watch The Background. ...
- Look For Symmetry/Patterns.



## FOCUS:

- Hold the Camera Straight
- How to Hold a Camera
- Tap, Tap, Tap, the Phone

## NUMBERS/VARIETY:

- SHOOT - SHOOT - SHOOT
- Balance Humans-Things



## LIGHT:

- Front Lighting
- Side Lighting
- Back Lighting
- Professional Lights vs. Nature



**SACRED OBJECTS**



**FOOD & FLORA**



**TEXTILES**



**SURROUNDINGS**



**COMMUNITY**



**PRACTICES**



**PHOTO CATEGORIES**

# 1ST QUARTER

<b>TITLE OF EVENT</b>	<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>DATE &amp; TIME &amp; LOCATION</b>	<b>SYNOPSIS</b>

# 2ND QUARTER

<b>TITLE OF EVENT</b>	<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>DATE &amp; TIME &amp; LOCATION</b>	<b>SYNOPSIS</b>

# 3RD QUARTER

<b>TITLE OF EVENT</b>	<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>DATE &amp; TIME &amp; LOCATION</b>	<b>SYNOPSIS</b>

# 4TH QUARTER

<b>TITLE OF EVENT</b>	<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>DATE &amp; TIME &amp; LOCATION</b>	<b>SYNOPSIS</b>

# TREAD CAREFULLY WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING RELIGIOUS EVENTS

October 30 | By Jeff Wignall | Posted in Art of Photography

*(The following is excerpted from Winning Digital Photo Contests, a new book by Black Star Rising contributor Jeff Wignall.)*

When visiting a country where religion is a visible part of daily life, you'll find that pictures of religious activities reveal cultural insights better than photographs of landmarks and landscapes. Rituals, festivals, and people dressed in religious garb personalize faiths otherwise unfamiliar to us.

## Be Tactful and Show Respect

You must be tactful when photographing religious events; exercise discretion and always show respect. Even at large public events, like the colorful shot of the Chhath Festival photographed by Indranil Sengupta beside the Taj Mahal in India [right], you have to use diplomacy and always defer to the spiritual nature of the subjects or activities.

If you see your subjects taking pictures of one another or if other tourists are shooting, the odds are that photography is accepted.

By offering a warm smile and pointing to your camera, you're likely to get permission to take someone's photo — or it may get you waved off and then at least you'll know.



## Ask Permission — and Smile!

The worst thing to do in a situation like this is to try to be surreptitious. As you can probably imagine, strangers with cameras at religious events or at holy sites could easily be viewed with mistrust or suspicion, and at the very least, if you shoot at the wrong moment or against someone's wishes, you might be viewed just as another ugly tourist.

Also, if you are working from a distance or with a long lens, as photographer Dilip Kumar Ganguly was in his shot of two young

lamas [left], it's best to be very obvious with your camera. It's not likely that those two happy faces would object to being photographed, but being up front will make you feel more confident and your smile might even help start a conversation or get you invited to areas that might otherwise be off limits.



<http://rising.blackstar.com/tread-carefully-when-photographing-religious-events.html>

# EVENT SHOT LIST

Photographer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sacred Objects (icons, beads, texts, etc...)



\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

## Food & Flora (communal, individual, etc...)

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Textiles** (clerical garments, celebrated individual, headwear, etc...)

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Surroundings** (external, internal, sacred spaces)

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community (Adults & Children)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Practices (Actions)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Description: \_\_\_\_\_

ONCE 4 Categories of the SHOT LIST  
are COMPLETE -  
CIRCLE THE VERY BEST 2 PHOTOS IN  
EACH CATEGORY.

# POST EVENT REFLECTIONS

1. Now that it's over, what are my first thoughts about this overall event shoot? Are they mostly positive or negative?
2. If positive, what comes to mind specifically? Negative?
3. What were some of my most challenging moments and what made them so?
4. What were some of my most powerful moments and what made them so?
5. What were some things my classmates did that helped me to learn or overcome obstacles?
6. What did I learn were my greatest strengths? My biggest areas for improvement?
7. What would I do differently if I were to approach the same problem again?
8. What moments was I most proud of my efforts?
9. How will I use what I've learned in the future?



Partner/Small  
Group  
Discussions

# PRINT IT - POST IT

## **PRINT:**

Students will have access to the Upper School MacLab. Each day after a shoot, student will send their edited images to their school email and access on a Mac computer. Then, LET THE PRINTING BEGIN!

## **POST IT:**

Time to wander with purpose. The two best photos of each student will be printed out and laid on the center table. Each student will be given a stack of Post It notes and a pen. Students will wander from photo to photo and leave positive or constructive comments on the back of all the photos.



What works about the photo? Where does your eye go at first glance? Do you have a constructive suggestion for how the photo might have been stronger?

# EXPOSURES:

## GALLERY SHOW

2019

EXAMPLE PROMO

Place of Gallery Show

Date

Time

Please join XX Independent Middle School student photographers to celebrate the results of visiting and finding the inherent beauty of Wichita religious festivals and events.

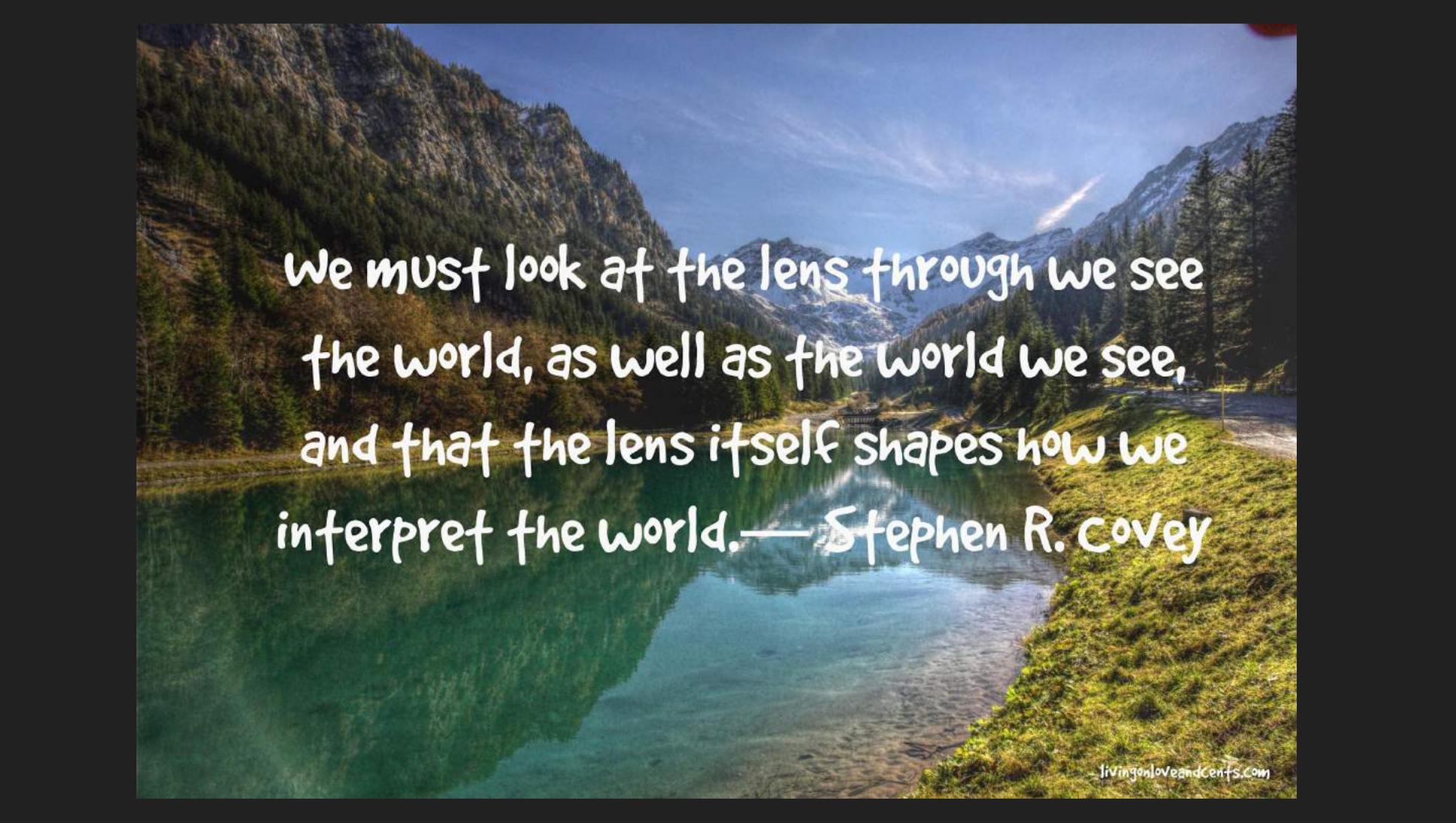
# EXPOSURES:



Worldviews Close to Home

# A Ritual to Read to Each Other

BY WILLIAM E. STAFFORD



We must look at the lens through we see  
the world, as well as the world we see,  
and that the lens itself shapes how we  
interpret the world.— Stephen R. Covey

# BIG QUESTIONS:

In small groups discuss

Questions as directed.

LISTEN TO EACH

OTHER, and be ready

to share with others

outloud.



# Golden Rules of Photography

# Composition



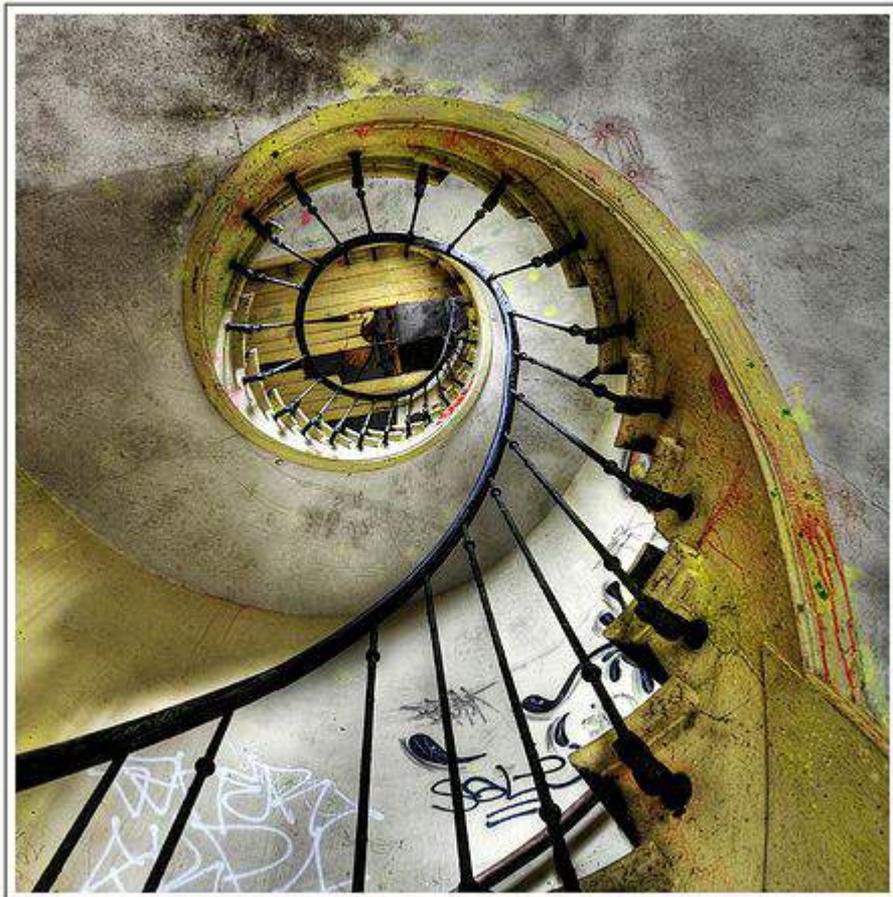


*gina yeo*









Focus











Light











# 6 Categories

# Sacred Objects:



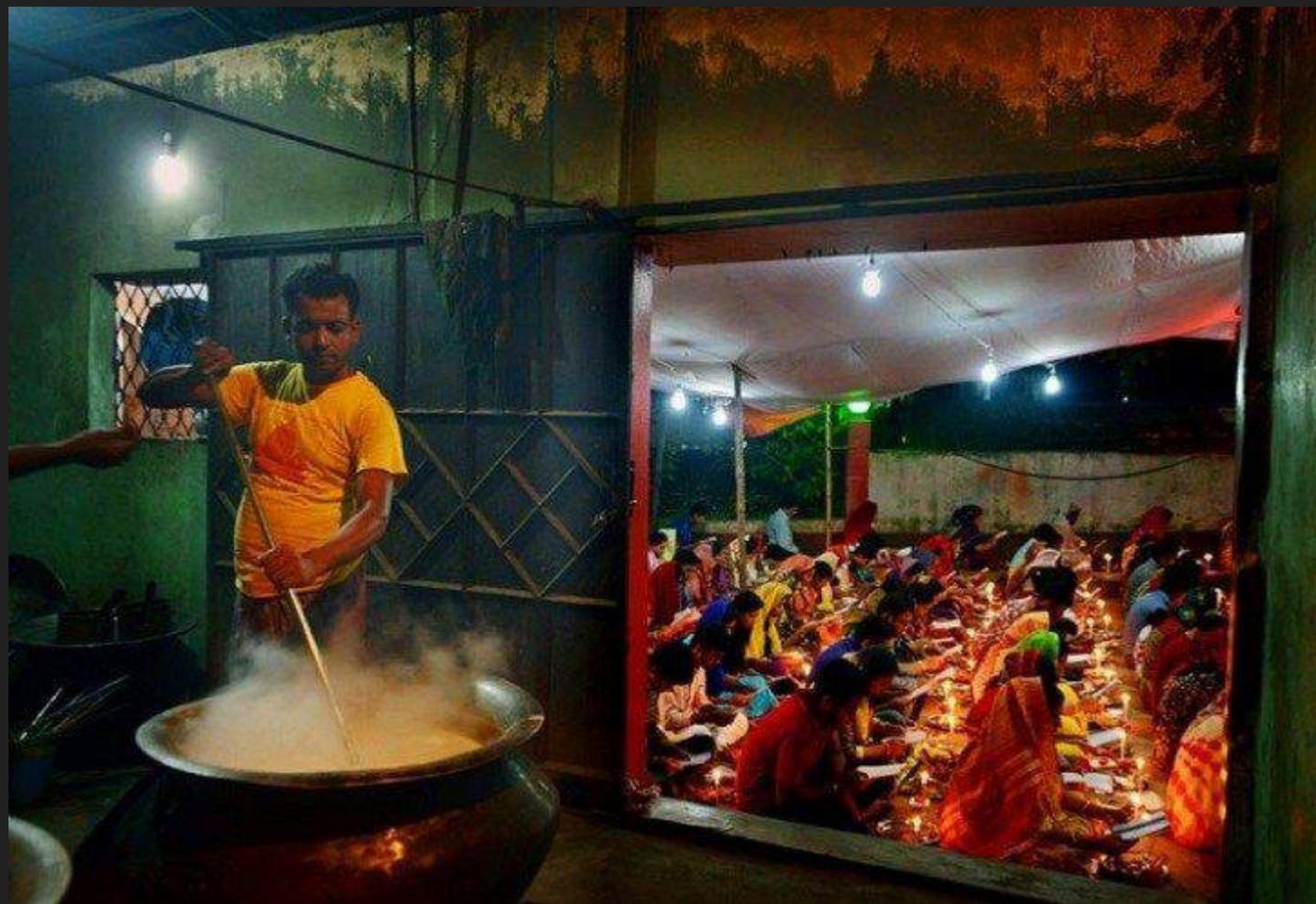




Sarah Kelly Photography

# Food & Flora:









Textiles:







# Surroundings:







# Community:







# Practices:







Research Time:

# 1ST QUARTER

TITLE OF EVENT	RELIGION	DATE & TIME & LOCATION	SYNOPSIS

Event  
Manners  
/Etiquette:

“Tread  
Carefully  
When  
Photographing  
Religious  
Events”



# Post Events Discussions:



Print it...

Size?

Black & White?

Color?

Edited?



Post it...

