



Religious Worlds of New York • *Curriculum Development Project*

Everyday Religious Life: Teaching from the Headlines, and our Grandmothers' Lives

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Abstract

This is the opening lesson to introduce a four week unit designed to address religious worlds for a one semester World History course for tenth grade students at Omak High School in north central Washington State. Omak High School is a public school of about 400 students' grades nine to twelve. Omak High School is adjacent to the Colville Indian Reservation.

Where is Omak?

Omak is the largest town in Okanogan County located in north central Washington State. The county is bordered on the north by British Columbia, Canada, the Columbia River to the south, the Cascade Mountains to the west and Ferry County to the east. The county is 5,281 square miles, the largest county in Washington. Only 30% of the land is in private ownership due to the amount of state and federal land. The Colville Indian Reservation, located in the southeast corner of the county, occupies approximately 700,000 acres of Okanogan County. The town of Omak has 4,495 people (Okanogan County.org).

Introduction Lesson for a study of contemporary Religious Worlds

This lesson will begin a four week study of Religious Worlds. It is designed for tenth graders in a one semester World History course at Omak High School.

The goal of the lesson is to introduce a unit about religious worlds as a way of teaching about religion in the world. Using the phrase religious worlds rather than world religions is deliberate, so as to communicate religion as a lived reality. Students will read, analyze and report about contemporary newspaper stories. Current newspaper stories are utilized to demonstrate the relevance of the topic for life today.

This lesson will be taught during the extended period of 105 minutes.

The teacher will assess each student according to her/his participation in the reading, discussing and presenting of the assigned material.

Beginning activity:

“My Grandmother”: the goal of the exercise is to emphasize respect.

The lesson will begin with students listening to a brief story about the teacher’s Grandmother. In the story the teacher will share her love of her Grandmother but that there were times when she felt “embarrassed” by the way her Grandmother would be in front of her friends. At the same time, how hurtful it would have been if the teacher’s friends would have laughed at her Grandmother.

Students are invited to share similar stories. After 6 to 8 minutes the teacher will say: “When we study religious worlds we are studying the ways of someone’s Grandmother. We would be hurt if someone ridiculed our Grandmother and this teaches us that because these WAYS belong to someone’s Grandmother we will approach and practice respect as we study”.

Divide into groups:

By counting, students will divide into six groups. Each group will have about 4 students. Students will sit facing each other.

The Task:

Each group will receive a newspaper story. The students in the group will read the story together. Students will then discuss each question for 2 minutes and each will write a response on his/her paper. Complete the questionnaire using this procedure.

***Note about newspaper stories.

The following six articles would be used for this lesson in the fall semester 2012. Other stories might be used for the winter semester 2013.

“From India to Rutgers, a Classic Dance Form Perseveres” NY Times 10 February 2012

“Rabbi Y.S. Elyashiv, Master of Talmudic Law, Dies at 102” NY Times 18 July 2012

“Scientists Speak Up on Mix of God and Science” NY Times 23 August 2005

“A Rare Buddhist Ceremony in Queens, Paid for With a Life’s Savings” NY Times 16 July 2012

“Complex Emotions Over First American Indian Saint” NY Times 24 July 2012

“Ramadan Arrives Amid High Heat and Political Transition in Arab World” NY Times 21 July 2012

Reporting Information

Each group will report to the class their response(s) to the first four questions.

The teacher will take notes and write them on the side board. Students will listen to each report. Students will not take notes during reports. Students will take notes during the concluding discussion.

Concluding discussion

The teacher will listen and gather points from each group's report. The goal is to gather information that will provide material to generate questions such as: What is religion? What is religious? Who decides? What do the scholars say? What do people say? What do practitioners say?

Students will be given time to take notes from the board.

Teacher will collect questionnaires.

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religious diversity, see:***

www.religiousworldsnyc.org

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Newspaper Story: provide the information required or complete the sentence.

Title of the article: _____

Name and date of newspaper: _____

The article is about _____

This article is religious because _____

This article is not religious because _____

This article is in the newspaper because _____

Respond to this last question without discussion:

Here are my thoughts about this article: _____

For Note Taking:

Name: _____

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