

## Teaching about World Religions using the AAR Pedagogical Competencies

### “Scavenger Hunt”

The objective of this modified “Scavenger Hunt” is to familiarize you with the World Religions identified in the ONLS (specifically focusing on 6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies content), understand the key issues and challenges faced with teaching about this content in public schools, and identifying appropriate resources, best practices and skills to effectively teach about World religions. We will use the Pedagogical Competencies outlined in the AAR document. Complete the Scavenger Hunt first (simply type responses in the boxes, or use other preferred format but you must address all components) and then you will participate in a Group Discussion (GD).

<b>Pedagogical Competencies</b>	<b>Explore/Research/Reflect</b>	<b>Application</b>
<p><b>Station 1</b> <b>(20 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the ONLS that focus on World Religions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Standard:</b>Grade 6 Social Studies  <b>Strand:</b> Geography  <b>Topic:</b> Human Systems  <b>Content Statement:</b> Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).</p> <p>Other content statements that connect to world religions, which is the basis of the content statement above, include:</p> <p><b>Standard:</b> Grade 6 Social Studies  <b>Strand:</b> History  <b>Topic:</b> Early Civilizations  <b>Content Statement:</b> Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today.</p> <p><b>Standard:</b>Grade 6 Social Studies  <b>Strand:</b> Geography  <b>Topic:</b> Places and Regions  <b>Content Statement:</b> Regions can be determined, classified and compared using various criteria (e.g., landform, climate, population, cultural, or economic).</p> <p><b>Standard:</b>Grade 6 Social Studies  <b>Strand:</b> Geography  <b>Topic:</b> Human Systems  <b>Content Statement:</b> Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today.</p>	

<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>• Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Buddhism Resources</b></p> <p>Graphics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buddhism. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="https://magic.piktochart.com/output/4827438-buddhism">https://magic.piktochart.com/output/4827438-buddhism</a></li> </ol> <p>Websites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Buddhism for Children. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/buddhism.htm">http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/buddhism.htm</a></li> <li>3. URI Kids :World Religions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.uri.org/kids/world_budd.htm">http://www.uri.org/kids/world_budd.htm</a></li> </ol> <p>Young Adult Literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Demi (1997). <i>Buddha Stories</i>. New York, NY: Henry Holt.</li> <li>5. Perry, M. L. (2008). <i>Taneesha Never Disparaging</i>. Boston: Wisdom Publications.</li> </ol>	<p>The 5 resources I found on <b>Buddhism</b> explain the following key ideas about this religion: Buddhism was first founded in India by Indian Prince, Siddharta Gautama in 520 B.C.E. This religion has spread into countries, such as India (8 million worship Buddhism), China (488 million worship Buddhism), Japan (9 million worship Buddhism) and Korea (11 million worship Buddhism). Buddha believes that the primary purpose of life is to end suffering. They believe that the Buddha saw the truth about what the world is like. They believe that nothing in the world is perfect, and that the Buddha found the answer to why it is like this. Buddha discovered Three Universal Truths (1. Everything in life is impermanent and always changing, 2. Because nothing is permanent, a life based on possessing things or persons doesn't make you happy, 3. There is no eternal, unchanging soul and "self" is just a collection of changing characteristics or attributes) and Four Noble Truths (1. Human life has a lot of suffering, 2. The cause of suffering is greed, 3. There is an end to suffering, and 4. The way to end suffering is to follow the Noble Fold-Path.) The Noble Eight-Fold Path consists of 1. Right View (understanding), 2. Right Thought, 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action, 5. Right Livelihood, 6. Right Effort, 7. Right Mindfulness, 8. Right Contemplation (concentration). Buddhists go to places like the Buddhist temple or the meditation hall to practice meditation and the sacred text is called the Tripitaka.</p>
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<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>•Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Christianity Resources</b></p> <p>Graphics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Timeline of Christianity [infographic] - Infographics - Data Visualization. (2014). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.infographicspedia.com/timeline-of-christianity-infographic/">http://www.infographicspedia.com/timeline-of-christianity-infographic/</a></li> <li>2. World Religions Map. (n.d.). Retrieved July 16, 2016, from <a href="http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sj14-soc-religmap/world-religions-map/">http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sj14-soc-religmap/world-religions-map/</a></li> </ol> <p>Websites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Christianity. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/christianity.htm">http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/christianity.htm</a></li> <li>4. URI Kids :World Religions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.uri.org/kids/world_chri.htm">http://www.uri.org/kids/world_chri.htm</a></li> </ol> <p>Young Adult Literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Heiligman, D. (2007). <i>Celebrate Christmas: With carols, presents, and peace</i>. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.</li> </ol>	<p>The 5 resources I found on <b>Christianity</b> explain the following key ideas about this religion:</p> <p>Christianity began as a small movement in the city of Jerusalem in the Roman province of Judea. Christianity traces its beginning to the miraculous birth, adult ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, known as Jesus Christ. Jesus was born in 4 B.C. In about 30 A.D, Jesus began to attract a following in Jerusalem. Jesus’ followers came to believe that Jesus was the son of the God of the Jews and that he performed miracles. The followers of Jesus angered Roman authorities because they refused to follow either Jewish or Roman laws. The authorities arrested and executed Jesus by nailing him to a cross. This form of execution is known as crucifixion. Three days after his execution, Jesus’ followers said they saw him risen from the dead. The Christians taught that people’s sins would be forgiven if they became Christian. The sacred text of Christianity is the Holy Bible, which consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Christians worship in churches and it is customary to worship on Sunday. Church services are most often led by an ordained priest or minister. From its beginning with a tiny group of Jesus' followers, Christianity has spread all over the world. As of the early 21st century, Christianity has approximately 2.4 billion adherents, out of about 7.2 billion people. The faith represents approximately one-third of the world's population and is the largest religion in the world. There are three basic streams of Christianity, which include Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic.</p>
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<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>•Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hinduism Resources</b></p> <p>Website:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. URI Kids :World Religions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.uri.org/kids/world_hind.htm">http://www.uri.org/kids/world_hind.htm</a></li> </ol> <p>Young Adult Literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Heiligman, D., &amp; Narayanan, V. (2008). <i>Celebrate Diwali: With sweets, lights and fireworks</i>. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.</li> <li>3. Senker, Cath (2003). <i>My Hindu Year (A Year of Religious Festivals)</i>. London, UK: Hodder &amp; Stoughton.</li> </ol>	<p>The 3 resources I found on <b>Hinduism</b> explain the following key ideas about this religion: Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma, which means eternal spiritual path, began about 4000 years ago in India. It was the religion of an ancient people known as the Aryans (noble people) whose philosophy, religion, and customs are recorded in their sacred texts known as the Vedas. Worldwide, there are almost one billion people professing some aspect of Hinduism today. The fundamental teaching of Hinduism is that a human being's basic nature is not confined to the body or the mind. Beyond both of these is the spirit or the spark of God within the soul. This spirit is within us and also within everything we see. All beings and all things are really, in their deepest essence, this pure or divine spirit, full of peace, full of joy and wisdom, ever united with God. The general name for God in Hinduism is Brahman. The name of the divine essence within us is Atman. The place of worship for Hinduism is called a mandir or temple. There is no set time or schedule to visit the temple. Worshippers go when they want. When entering the temple, you must take off your shoes and women cover their heads to show respect. In the Hinduism religion there are three main yearly festivals. Diwali is the festival of lights. Light represents knowledge. It is celebrated in late Oct. or early Nov. This is the Hindu New Year. Holi is the festival which marks the coming of spring and is held in March or April. There are parades, bonfires and people cover each other with colored water and powders. Lastly, Dussehra is the festival which marks Rama's triumph over the evil Ravana, which is held in Sep. There are dances and plays with events in which the life of the god Rama is portrayed.</p>
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<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>• Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Islam Resources</b></p> <p>Graphics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Liu, J. (2012). Infographic: The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-infographic/">http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-infographic/</a></li> </ol> <p>Websites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Islam. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/islam.htm">http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/islam.htm</a></li> <li>3. URI Kids :World Religions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.uri.org/kids/world_isla.htm">http://www.uri.org/kids/world_isla.htm</a></li> </ol> <p>Young Adult Literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Gottesfeld, J., Wong, E., &amp; Abdel-Fattah, R. (n.d.). <i>Does My Head Look Big In This?</i></li> <li>5. Addasi, Maha (2010). <i>Time to Pray</i>. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.</li> <li>6. Demi (2003). <i>Muhammad</i>. New York, NY: Margaret K. McElderry Books</li> <li>7. Heiligman, D., &amp; Yavari, N. (2006). <i>Celebrate Ramadan &amp; Eid al-fitr</i>. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.</li> </ol>	<p>The 7 resources I found on <b>Islam</b> explain the following key ideas about this religion:</p> <p>Islam is a monotheistic faith centered around the belief in one God (Allah). Allah is the Arabic word for God. This God is the same universal God worshipped by people of all faiths. Islam first spread quickly throughout Arabia and surrounding countries then throughout the world. There are 1.2 billion Muslims in the world. Only about 18% of Muslims are Arabs and live in the Middle East. Countries with the largest Muslim populations, include Indonesia and India. There are two basic groups of Islam: the Sunnis (about 80% of the world's Muslims) and the Shi'ites (about 20% of the world's Muslims). These two groups share the same basic beliefs, but disagree on who was the rightful leader of Islam after Muhammad's death. Muslims have 6 major beliefs. Belief in one God (Allah). Belief in the Angels, Belief in the holy books sent to all the prophets (Torah, The Bible, and Qur'an or Koran), Belief in all the prophets sent by God (Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad), Belief in the Day of Judgment and life after death, and Belief in divine decree (God is all-powerful and nothing can happen without His permission). Muslims believe in ritual praying (Salat) where five daily prayers are performed and fasting (Muslims fast during the daylight hours in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar called Ramadan).</p>
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<p><b>Station 1</b></p> <p>•Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Judaism Resources</b></p> <p>Websites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Judaism. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/judaism.htm">http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/judaism.htm</a></li> <li>2. URI Kids :World Religions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <a href="http://www.uri.org/kids/world_juda.htm">http://www.uri.org/kids/world_juda.htm</a></li> </ol> <p>Young Adult Literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Heiligman, D. (2006). <i>Celebrate Hanukkah</i>. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic.</li> <li>4. Yolen, Jane (2004). <i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i>. New York, NY: Puffin Books.</li> </ol>	<p>The 4 resources I found on <b>Judaism</b> explain the following key ideas about this religion: Judaism began about 4000 years ago in the Middle East with the Hebrew people. Abraham, who was a Hebrew man, is considered the father of the Jewish faith because he promoted that there is one God, which is the central idea of the Jewish faith. Today, about fourteen million Jewish people live all over the world. Approximately half of them live in the United States, one quarter live in Israel, and a quarter are scattered around the world in Europe, Russia, South America, Africa, Asia and other North American and Middle Eastern countries. Jewish people believe in the Torah, which consisted on laws given to the Israelites. They believe they must follow God's laws which govern daily life. Jewish festivals and celebrations are centered around important events in history of the Jews. These festivals and celebrations include Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year festival), Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement during which Jewish people fast, pray, and atone for their sins, asking God for forgiveness), Passover (marks the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, the giving of the ten commandments and the journey to Israel), Hanukkah (the festival of lights), and Bar mitzvah/Bat mitzvah (ceremonies that mark a child's thirteenth birthday). Jewish people worship in synagogues where the services are led by a rabbi.</p>
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<p><b>Station 2</b> <b>(15 points)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Highlight at least 2 key points from the reading that addresses each of these competencies</b></p> <p>For the first competency, the teacher should develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others. One key idea from The AAR that clearly addresses this competency states, “A religious studies approach to teaching about religion is intended to introduce students to the vast array of faith-based expressions that exist within and between traditions with the aim of deepening understanding about religious diversity and the roles that religion plays in political, economic, and cultural life across time” (pg. 4). By challenging students to engage in discussions about religious beliefs they are given the opportunity to deepen their understanding about religious diversity as well as the different roles religion plays in ones political, economic, and cultural life. Additionally, a best practice used in social studies by teachers is to promote meaningful instruction. Through discussions that the teacher leads the students are able to use their own experiences to support their understanding as well as their peers’ understanding about religious diversity and their unique roles. Deepening student knowledge about religion based on their own experiences and beliefs results in a more meaningful experience.</p> <p>A second key idea from the AAR that addresses this competency is premise number three in regards to why teach about religion. This fundamental premise states, “It is possible to diminish religious illiteracy by teaching about religion from a non-devotional perspective in primary, middle, and secondary schools... Learning about religion is no guarantee that religious bigotry and chauvinism will cease, but it will make it more difficult for such bigotry and chauvinism to be unwittingly reproduced and promoted” (Pg. 6). Engaging in discussions about students’ religious beliefs and practices as well as the beliefs and practices of others will support the fight against bigotry and chauvinism both inside and outside the classroom. Through these discussions, students will learn more deeply about the religious diversity in their own classroom and in their community. Especially after building a safe classroom environment where the teacher and students respects each other as well as embrace and see the positives of diversity, students will begin to appreciate and enjoy learning about differing religions.</p>	<p><b>How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions?</b> <b>Provide at least 1 example for each competency</b></p> <p>To incorporate the first competency into my teaching of world religions I would ask students to first think about their religious beliefs and practices in their interactive notebook. I would ask students to explain their religious beliefs and practices as if they were explaining it to someone who had never heard of it before. I would then ask students to write in their notebook about a person (a friend, a family friend, classmate, family member, etc.) that has different religious beliefs and practices than them. Students will write anything they know about that religion as well as any questions they may have. If a student doesn’t know anyone else that believes and practices a different religion then they will discuss in their notebook any other religion(s) they have heard of or know about. The teacher would then lead a discussion with the students about their notebook entries. The teacher will ask each student to get out of their seats with their notebooks and to find a person in the room that either believes and practices a different religion than them or wrote about a different religion. The students will be asked to share 1-2 ideas from their notebook about differing religions with at least on other person. The teacher will then lead a class discussion regarding students’ notebook entry and their experiences during the activity. During the discussion, the teacher and students will create a concepts map that displays the differing religious beliefs and practices in their classroom. The teacher can also add other religions that were not mentioned. This information will assess students’ background knowledge as well as be a great introduction into the study of world religions.</p>
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<p><b>Station 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion.</li> </ul>	<p>For the second competency, the teacher should be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion. Using a variety of best practices while teaching about religion will support students in learning unbiased knowledge as well as gaining conceptual understanding of this topic. One key idea that clearly addresses this competency are the four approaches to teaching about religion in the classroom that the AAR describes. These approaches include, historical, literary, traditions-based, and cultural studies methods (pg. 9). It is essential for the teacher to be aware of these best practices as well as understand their strengths and weaknesses for classroom use. For example, the historical approach “is very commonly used in social studies classes where religion occurs within courses or lessons focused on history. The strengths of the historical approach are clear: the origins of a religion and its development are presented in historical context with the political and cultural influences represented as central to understanding how that religion emerged, gained followers, and spread” (pg. 9). In contrast, the literary approach “is common in English language arts classes in which students read religious texts themselves or novels, stories, and poetry with religious themes and/or imagery. Using this approach, teachers help students gain an appreciation of the way that religion infuses all aspects of culture by seeing how religious allusion and metaphor can become a common language that is shared by a people” (pg 10). Overall, to be successful in teaching about religion, teacher must be aware of best practices as well as their strengths and weaknesses for classroom use.</p> <p>Teaching about religion brings about many challenges that other subjects seldom have. “Students in a physics course rarely come to class with a sense that they have particular insights that will be relevant and helpful to a class discussion of vectors, but when the subject is religion, students can feel that their own personal experiences give them special knowledge and authority”(pg. 11). Therefore, a second key idea from the AAR that addresses this competency is to examine assumptions that both the teacher and students have about religion. The AAR states, “Having students explore their assumptions is an essential first step in helping them look at religion clearly...By explaining how biases and assumptions can act as a filter on new knowledge, they gain an important tool that they can return to again and again throughout their explorations about religion specifically and other topics more generally” (pg. 12). It is essential that teachers are aware of this practice as well as the benefits of explaining how this practice can support students new knowledge. By first exploring assumptions of religion and religious practices through writing, brainstorming and discussions, students can begin to look at this topic clearly. Additionally, by explaining this best practice students can better understand their own preconceived ideas about religion as well as how their ideas may stereotype and misjudge the beliefs and practices of others, including that of their own peers in the classroom or school (pg. 12). Overall, the importance of teachers being aware of examples of best practices goes far beyond supporting students in their knowledge of religion. With this awareness, teachers have the knowledge, tools, and resources to support students in understanding and identifying their own assumptions of religions, the diversity of religions, that religions are dynamic, and the cultural practices of religions.</p>	<p><b><i>How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency</i></b></p> <p>To incorporate the second competency into my teaching of world religions I would use the literary approach, which is one of the best practices described in AAR. In this approach students read religious texts themselves or novels, stories, and poetry with religious themes and/or imagery. To engage students in the literary approach I would gather stories, novels and images from different religions. I could use some of the resources I found during station 1, such as <i>Buddha Stories</i> and infographics. Students would then analyze these resources in small groups. I would first challenge students to compare and contrast the information they receive from the different resources. I would then challenge students to compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of the different religions. Students will engage in small group discussions and create two venn diagrams on chart paper in order to analyze and discuss their findings of the differing resources and religions. Students will then complete a gallery walk where they will analyze each groups venn diagrams. Following the gallery walk we will then have a class discussion. The teacher and students will create a class venn diagram finalizing each groups ideas about the differing resources and religions. Through this discussion I will also support students’ understanding that analyzing stories, novels and images helps us see the specific ways that individuals experience their religion as well as help to reinforce the idea that generalizations about religion are often flawed.</p>
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<p><b>Station 2</b></p> <p>• Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.</p>	<p>For the third competency, the teacher should develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way. One key idea from the AAR that addresses this competency are the guidelines developed by James V. Panoch. The AAR states, “In 1974, religious studies scholar James V. Panoch developed a set of guidelines for distinguishing between teaching religion in a way that promotes a particular faith and teaching about religion from a religious studies perspective” (pg.7). Among these guidelines include, the school’s approach to religion is <i>academic</i>, not <i>devotional</i>, the school strives for student <i>awareness</i> of religions, but does not press for student <i>acceptance</i> of any religion, and the school sponsors <i>study</i> about religion, not the <i>practice</i> of religion (pg. 7). The teacher will develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way if she follows the guidelines created by Panoch and approaches religion in an academic rather than devotional way.</p> <p>A second key idea from the AAR that addresses this competency is that religions are internally diverse. The AAR states, “A basic premise of religious studies is that religions are not internally homogeneous but diverse. In schools and in popular culture, faith traditions are often presented as a single set of beliefs, practices, and representations without internal variation” (pg. 12). While major differences about religions are introduced and discussed, less dramatic or clearly defined distinctions about religions are often not discussed or overlooked within classrooms. Presenting multiple religious perspectives in a fair and neutral way involves discussing the less dramatic or clearly defined distinctions of all religions. “It is important for students to learn, for example, that Muslims in Indonesia will practice their faith differently than Muslims in Nigeria. In a similar vein, wealthy Muslims in Jakarta may practice an Islam that looks somewhat different than poor Muslims in rural Java” (pg. 12). Students should learn and analyze these less major differences in all religions. Being aware of this premise of religious studies is one way for teachers to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.</p>	<p><b><i>How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency</i></b></p> <p>To incorporate the third competency into my teaching of world religions I would first spend the same amount of time studying each religion. I would also use similar practices to study each religion, such as the literary approach. In other words, I would not just use one of the best practices to study Christianity and all four to study Hinduism. I would then place students into groups and have them research a specific religion in depth. I would challenge students to research the religion’s beliefs, practices, culture, rituals, celebrations, etc. I would then challenge students to create a video or role play to teach their classmates about the religion they researched. I would then have the groups pick a different religion and research ways that religion is internally diverse. Students will create a project to explain how the second religion they chose is internally diverse. Students may create a Wordle, a broadcasting video, a skit, a comic strip, etc. Students will be challenged to display their new knowledge in a creative way. Throughout this process, the teacher and students will be creating anchor charts to hang around the classroom in order to explain their findings on each religion. The creation of anchor charts for each religion is another way the teacher presents multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way.</p>
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<p><b>Station 3 (15 points)</b></p>	<p><b><i>The AAR guidelines outlines 4 Approaches to teaching religion (see pages 10-11). Which approach do you think you will follow? Why?</i></b></p> <p>I think I will follow the literary approach to teaching religion for a few reasons. For one, I will be teaching language arts and social studies next year. This approach allows me to easily integrate these two subjects, which is what I want and hope to do on a daily basis. Also, through past experiences I have learned that even the most reluctant social studies learners engage in activities that involve stories, novels, poetry, and imagery. Secondly, I feel much more comfortable teaching literacy than I do world religions. I have many more resources and teaching experiences with literacy and feel as through this approach would better support my knowledge of world religions as well as my students'. This approach also isn't foreign to me. Although this is the first time learning about this specific approach, I very often expose students to a variety of novels, stories, poetry and/or imagery with a specific theme. Lastly, the AAR states, "Using this approach, teachers help students gain an appreciation of the way that religion infuses all aspects of culture by seeing how religious allusion and metaphor can become a common language that is shared by a people. Looking at a particular story where religious expression is a theme helps students see the very specific ways that individuals experience their religion and helps to reinforce the idea that generalizations about religion are often flawed" (pg. 10). I truly believe that studying world religions using the literary approach challenges students to use higher order thinking. Students are moving beyond simply memorizing facts and are analyzing a piece of text or imagery and reflecting on its information about religion. Overall, I think the literary approach to teaching world religions makes this topic more meaningful as well as makes the information students are learning come alive through literature and images.</p>	<p><b><i>How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.</i></b></p> <p>One idea I have to implement the literary approach into practice is to have students place themselves in the shoes of kids their age that practice and believe the 5 different religions. Students will use stories, poetry, novels and imagery to better understand the lives of kids their age that practice Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. I will provide students with many resources, such as the literature in station 1. Students will also have access to the library. This project-based idea will be completed while students are engaged in novels with religion themes. The novels will also act as a resource to students. Along the way, students will upload blog posts or video posts to their Padlet page where they explain the resources they used, their findings, their reactions and any questions. Students will upload 5 different posts to their page for each of the 5 religions. Students will also review and comment on at least 5 other classmates posts. The students will also discuss in small groups specific examples from the novels, stories, poetry or imagery how individuals experience their religion helps to reinforce the idea that generalizations about religion are often flawed.</p>
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<p><b>Station 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the difference between the secular academic and devotional approaches to religion, and consistently use the secular academic approach.</li> <li>• Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom.</li> <li>• Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom.</li> <li>• Create an environment of respect and tolerance—a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about religion.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?</i></b></p> <p>The competencies state that teachers will consistently use the secular academic approach, address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom, be aware of and manage religious diversity in the classroom, and classroom environment where students feel safe talking about religion. The first competency involves teachers consistently using the secular academic approach, which means denoting attitudes, activities, or other things that have no religious or spiritual basis rather than a devotional approach, which refers to a religious commitment. AAR states, “The school strives for student <i>awareness</i> of religions, but does not press for student <i>acceptance</i> of any religion” (pg. 7). By keeping this guideline in mind while teaching world religions I will assure the use of a secular academic approach rather than a devotional approach. The second competency states that teachers will be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom. In order to do this, I must support students’ understanding of religious illiteracy. The AAR explains that the main source of information about religions comes from ones own trainings in their religious traditions as well as the media (pg. 5). Therefore, I must create a classroom environment where students understand the diversity on religions as well as their preconceived ideas or assumptions about religions. The third competency states that teachers should be aware of and manage effectively religious diversity in the classroom. In order to be aware of religious diversity in our classroom I must know the religious beliefs and practices of my students as well as my students’ assumptions. The AAR states, “Often students will have strongly held ideas about the positive or negative role of religion in the world, ideas about religious and non- religious people, and ideas about particular faiths...Having students explore their assumptions is an essential first step in helping them look at religion clearly” (pg. 11-12). Being more aware of the religious diversity on our classroom will help me manage how it may impact our classroom (in both a positive and negative way). This quote and idea from AAR also contributes to the fourth competency about creating an environment of respect and tolerance. Students should always feel safe and free to talk about religion in our classroom. Asking students to first explore their assumptions and reflect on their own preconceived ideas about religions will support them in thinking about how their initial assumptions may stereotype and/or misjudge the beliefs and practices of peers in their classroom or school (pg. 12). Some students may not understand how their preconceived ideas about religion may be hurtful and disrespectful to their peers. Therefore, it is my responsibility to create a safe environment where students understand that we will learn the most from talking to each other about religion. Students must also understand that this can’t be done unless every student is respectful, embraces diversity, and is open to learning about new religious beliefs and practices that may be different from their own.</p>	<p>An idea to implement the literary approach as well as the first competency is to engage students in an imagery activity. I would display 5 different images on the smart board that represent the 5 different religions and ask students to analyze the image. A resource I could use is the book <i>Material World: A Global Family Portrait</i>. This book consists of photographs of families from different countries. Each photo has a description of the family as well as a list of their most valuable possessions they have with them. I would support students in analyzing these images with questions: What do you see? What don’t you see? What are you wondering? Through this activity and with support from the teacher the students gain an appreciation of the way that religion infuses all aspects of culture by seeing how religious allusion and metaphor can become a common language that is shared by a people. The students are also engaged in an activity that teaches them about the differing religions (secular approach) rather than forcing a specific religion on them. One activity to implement a safe and respectful classroom environment would be to create what this classroom would look like on chart paper. I would first ask students to work in small groups to come up with ideas about what a safe and respectful classroom would look like. How are the students/teacher acting? What are the students/teacher saying? How will every student in our class feel safe to talk about religion? The teacher and students will then create a list on chart paper about what a safe and respectful classroom environment looks like, feels like, sounds like, etc. The teacher will then give the students different situations to role play. The class will discuss if the students acted in a way that created a safe and respectful classroom environment or not and what they can do to make it safe and respectful.</p>
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<p><b>Station 4 : Final Reflection</b></p> <p><b>10 points</b></p>	<p><b>Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development, pedagogy and thinking about teaching social studies?</b></p> <p>Overall, I found that the AAR document greatly supported my thinking about teaching social studies, especially world religions. Since I will be a first year teacher this upcoming school year I lack experience in social studies. However, as soon as I got offered my position teaching language arts and social studies I immediately worried about the topic of religion. My biggest worry was that my students would think I was pushing a particular religious belief on them even though that was not my intention; I feared upset parents accusing me of telling their student to believe and practice a particular religion. However, the AAR document has calmed these fears through expressing the importance of teaching religion as well as providing me with approaches to teach about religion. I also have a better understanding of the difference between teaching religion from an academic viewpoint, and a devotional viewpoint, which is the method that should not be used in public schools. In regards to my professional development, the AAR document helped me gain a much better understanding of social studies and its importance. Teaching about religion is important because otherwise, students will likely remain religiously illiterate. Before reading this document, I had never heard of the literary approach, but the methods used in this approach were familiar to me. After reading about the literary approach I gained an understanding of what good social studies instruction looks like. Better yet, the AAR document helped me bridge the gap between language arts and social studies and begin thinking about pedagogical practices. This document explained 4 approaches that can be used when teaching religion. Before reading these methods I had never really thought about my approach for next year. Although the literary method seems familiar to me the cultural studies approach is a method that I plan on using as well. This approach is appealing to me because “It serves as a tool to build upon and enhance the other three approaches in its emphasis on recognizing the ways that religion is embedded in culture and cannot be understood in isolation from its particular social/historical expressions” (pg.10). Overall, the AAR document helped calm my fears about teaching religion, supported my understanding of religion and its importance and introduced new pedagogical practices that I plan on using in my classroom next year.</p>	<p><b>How will you take all of the information you have gained from AAR and your research and make it comprehensible to your 6<sup>th</sup> graders? This is your “snapshot of practice” - provide at least 1 specific example of practice.</b></p> <p>When we first begin studying religion I will ask students to analyze their own religious beliefs and practices. I will also ask students to think about any other religious beliefs and practices besides their own that they have heard of or know anything about. I will have students write their responses in their notebook. Through these responses I will learn more about the religious diversity in our classroom as well as as any assumptions and/or misconceptions students have. In order to create a more tolerant, respectful, and safe classroom I will create a list on chart paper with the students about what a safe and respectful classroom environment looks like, feels like, sounds like, etc. I will then give students different situations to role play. The class will discuss if the students acted in a way that created a safe and respectful classroom environment or not and what they can do to make it safe and respectful. I will then lead a discussion about misconceptions and how their initial assumptions may stereotype and/or misjudge the beliefs and practices of peers in their classroom or school. Throughout our study of world religions I will provide students with multiple resources, such as novels, stories, poetry, images, websites, and videos as well as challenge students to find their own resources.</p>
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<p><b>Station 4 : Final Reflection</b></p>		<p><b><i>How will you take all of the information you have gained from AAR and your research and make it comprehensible to your 6<sup>th</sup> graders? This is your “snapshot of practice” - provide at least 1 specific example of practice.</i></b></p> <p>One specific example of practice that I would use in my classroom to study religion would be for students to get into small groups (groups of 3’s) and deeply research one of the 5 religions. Students will research different aspects of this religion, such as beliefs, practices, culture, celebrations, rituals, geographical origin, founding leaders, etc. On the same day each group will “present” their information to their classmates. However, this is not a traditional presentation. Our classroom will be transformed into a world religion festival. The students will bring in artifacts (very similar to the artifact box we completed) that represent or symbolize their religion. The students and teacher will walk around the festival to learn about the different religions by talking to each other. The students will be challenged to discuss the similarities and differences between their religions. Following the festival, the teacher and students will reflect on the discussions they had, the artifacts they saw, questions they have, similarities and differences they notices, etc.</p>
<p><b>Total: 60 points</b></p>		