

World Religions Grade 11

Course Description

In World Religions, students study the belief systems of other religions and the manner in which the Catholic Church relates to other religions throughout the world. Building on the foundational truth that Jesus Christ established the Catholic Church and entrusted to her the fullness of God's Revelation, this course is intended to help students understand the moral principles that many religions have in common; increase their understanding of other people and their belief systems; and, work in cooperation with the Church to build interreligious dialogue and encourage mutual respect among people and religions.

Portrait of the Crusader

Coursework emphasizes the importance of respecting human worth, enhancing human dignity, and developing a socially just perspective. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, students are guided to follow a moral compass rooted in integrity and respect, to value the uniqueness of every human being, and to work daily toward a more fair and just society.

Course Curriculum

Unit 1 - Judaism and Islam (5 weeks)

Guiding Questions

1. What is salvation history?
2. Why is Abraham considered the father of faith?
3. What are the central teachings of Judaism?
4. What are the central teachings of Islam?
5. How does the Church guide us to foster mutual understanding and respect among religions?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ We are called upon to love and grow in mutual respect for one another as people of God.
- ❖ Understanding the common ties that unite us while respecting our differences will promote mutual respect.
- ❖ We can learn about other belief systems and give common witness on matters of virtue, peace, and justice.

Concepts and Skills

- Explain the concept of salvation history as expressed through Judaism and Islam.
- Analyze why Abraham is called the father of faith and the term *Abrahamic religions*.
- Examine the history of Judaism. Describe the covenants between God and Abraham and God and Moses, and define the term *Chosen People*.
- Explain the Exodus and discuss why it is the defining event in the history of the Jewish people.
- Explain the central teachings of Judaism and its sacred texts.
- Explain the origins of Islam and the meaning of the name. Trace the life of Muhammed.

- Explain the central teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars, the Six Articles of Faith, and its sacred text.
- Examine the common ties and differences among Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.
- Read and interpret the teachings of the Church focused on renouncing prejudice and promoting mutual respect among religions. Understand Vatican II's teaching of *Nostra Aetate*.

Assessments, options include:

- **Research and Present:** Option 1: Explore the roots of the Abrahamic faiths show the connections between each member and their faith experience and tradition. Option 2: Research the work of a contemporary Jewish or Muslim contributor and explain how this person emulates his/her faith and works for social justice. (The teacher will determine if the presentation is oral or written)
- **Written Assessment(s)** focused on the origins, beliefs, and practices of Judaism and Islam.

Unit 2 - Eastern Religions (4 -5 weeks)

Guiding Questions

1. What are the central teachings of the major Eastern religions?
2. What guidance and practices does each religion provide for living a life of virtue and coping with suffering?
3. What are the similarities with the moral principles of Christianity?
4. What were the contributions of Thomas Merton in building a dialogue between Western and Eastern religions?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ Many religions have teachings focused on living a life of virtue that echo each other, and these elements can be the basis for mutual understanding.
- ❖ Interreligious dialogue allows us to relate to people of other faiths and share faith experiences with others.

Concepts and Skills

- Explain the origins, central teachings, and sacred texts of the major Eastern religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism; analyze each faith's understanding of salvation.
- Analyze common moral principles and practices for living a life of virtue among the Eastern religions. Compare with guidance provided by the Gospels.
- Examine the work of Thomas Merton in relation to his role in the East-West monastic dialogue.
- Read and interpret the teachings of the Church focused on renouncing prejudice and promoting mutual respect among religions.

Assessments, options include:

- **Research and Present:** Option 1: Examine the central teachings and moral practices from a specific Eastern religion and compare with those of Christianity; determine how similarities could be used as the basis for initiating interfaith dialogue. Option 2: Research the work of a

contemporary leader/contributor from the Hindu or Buddhist tradition and explain how this person emulates the principles of the tradition. (Teacher will determine if the presentation is oral or written.)

- **Written Assessment(s)** focused on the origins, central beliefs, and practices of the major Eastern religions.

Unit 3 - The Church (3 weeks)

Guiding Questions

1. What is Divine Revelation?
2. How does salvation history continue through Jesus Christ?
3. How does the Great Commission carry on?
4. Why is the Church considered the Body of Christ?
5. How was/is the Church shaped by the Ecumenical Councils?
6. What does the Church do to encourage ecumenical and interreligious dialogue?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ The Church is the one Body of Christ and an image of the Triune God.

Concepts and Skills

- Define the purpose and sources of Divine Revelation.
- Summarize salvation history through Jesus Christ. Discuss why the Church considers Jesus as “the fullness of Revelation”.
- Explain why the Church is considered the *Body of Christ* and why communion is the heart of the Church.
- Analyze the meaning of Ecumenism and ecumenical dialogue, and review the contemporary Ecumenical Movement. Discuss how to apply the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils to deepen one's faith and cultivate unity with others.
- Describe the mission/work of the Paulist Fathers and the Order of the Holy Cross; make a personal connection.

Assessments options include:

- **Research and Apply:** Using the efforts of the Paulist Fathers as a guide, research the Order of Holy Cross and their efforts of ecumenism and evangelization. Present findings and identify ways to incorporate these efforts into daily life. (Teacher will determine if this is an oral or written presentation.)

Unit 4 -Other Christian Religions and Traditions (4 weeks)

Guiding Questions

1. What led to the Great Schism between the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches?
3. What is the historical background of the Protestant movement?
4. How do the Protestant denominations differ from each other?

5. What beliefs and practices unite Christians?

Enduring Understandings

- ❖ The belief in Jesus as the Messiah, moral commitments rooted in the Decalogue, the Beatitudes, and the Great Commandments are shared beliefs that unite many Christians.

Concepts and Skills

- Examine the reasons for the Great Schism of 1054 and the modern efforts at dialogue.
- Discuss the similarities and differences among the Roman Catholic, the Eastern Catholic, and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.
- Appreciate the diversity offered by the Eastern Catholic Church.
- Summarize the historical background of the Protestant Reformation.
- Understand the origins and beliefs of the major Protestant denominations.
- Explain how baptism expresses the principal beliefs of Christianity and unites many Christians.
- Apply the research and thinking skills learned in the course to read and summarize information about other faith-based traditions.

Assessments, options include:

- **Analysis of the Great Schism** - Part 1: In groups, create a timeline of the events leading up to and including the Schism of 1054, including details about events and individuals and how these contributed to the development of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the East.
Part 2: Class Debate -*What do these events and their consequences say about the impact of politics and religion becoming overly interconnected?* Include historical reasons for or against the interconnection of politics and religion.
- **Affinity Mapping** to compare the moral principles encouraged by the religions studied in the course and determine ways to apply these principles to daily life.

Resources May Include:

- Textbook: *Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue*
- [Embassy of Israel](#)
- www.history.com/topics/religion/judaism (/islam, /hinduism, /buddhism)
- www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics